

# THE REFORMED CHURCH REVIEW

---

No. 2.—APRIL—1909.

---

## I.

### JOHN CALVIN, THE MAN.

BY REV. H. M. J. KLEIN, PH.D.

The mighty movement of religious and civil liberty which spread over Europe in the sixteenth century and which came to be known as the Reformation was remarkable among other things for the great personal quality of its leaders. To look upon the Reformation as but the lengthening shadow of any one man is to misread its significance. Among a number of men of light and leading, three names tower above all others. They are Luther, Zwingli and Calvin. Each differs from the other in nationality, education, talent, temperament and field of labor. Yet they were joined in a common purpose and labored for the same end. Calvin never saw either of the other two. He was the child of a later stage in the development of the Reformation. He belonged to the reconstruction period rather than to the first generation of Reformers. The whole complex movement, however, revolved in large part around the personality of these three remarkable men; Luther, the man of love, great of heart, original, forceful, genial pioneer; Zwingli, the man of light, broad of mind, classic, illuminating patriot; Calvin, the man of law, logical, systematic, constructive genius, brilliant in intellect and unbending in conviction.

Of these three John Calvin has been looked upon as the least

attractive historical figure. Few great men have been so little known as this really unusual and remarkable man. It has been predicted for the past generation that the fourth centenary of the birth of Calvin in 1909 would not elicit the enthusiasm accorded to that of Luther in 1883 or Zwingli in 1884. Men have alas too often dismissed Calvin with a reference to the tragedy of Servetus and the *decretum horribile*. It is a strange fact that the life and character of men who have personified a doctrine before the world have been esteemed in direct proportion to the world's valuation of the one tenet with which their names seem destined to be connected. Unhappy Polonius is shorn of much of his real worth by the satirical stab of Hamlet. The beautiful culture of Francis Xavier and his holy zeal for souls seem forever to be veiled by the term Jesuitism. John Calvin, the man, has often been looked upon as only a "dry intolerant theologian," identified with all that has gone, for better or for worse, by the name of Calvinism. There is an evolution of feeling taking place in reference to the merits of this man and the services he rendered to the cause of Christ. Few historical figures grow in a more interesting manner under the influence of honest research, freed from the shades of prejudice, loosened from the vicissitudes of the system of thought with which his name is connected, than does the figure of John Calvin. It is the man then, in all his human qualities, that we shall seek to understand and weigh according to his merits, recalling necessarily the outer events of his life, but only in so far as these shall throw real light on the sources, motives and aims of his inner life and character.

In the preface to his "Commentary on the Psalms," deeply conscious of the greatness of his mission, seeing as in a mirror the picture of his own life imaged in that of the Psalmist, Calvin writes: "As David was raised from the sheepfold to the highest dignity of government, so God has dignified me, derived from an obscure and humble origin, with the high and honorable office of Minister and Preacher of the Gospel." The French Reformer like the German and the Swiss sprang



not from the nobles but from the more lowly classes. His grandfather had followed the trade of a cooper in the little village of Pont-l'Évêque. The father had through industry and thrift brought himself to some position in life, becoming secretary to the bishop and registrar of the government in the little mediæval town of Noyon in Picardy, some fifty miles northeast of Paris. Here John Calvin, the second of four sons, was born on July 10, 1509. Concerning his youth we have rather sparse information. His mother died early. The father found little time for the nurture of his children, nor did he understand how to win their affection. Young Calvin got most of his training outside of his father's house. In the home of the noble family of de Montmor he received his early education and that acquaintance with the ways of polite society for which he was distinguished in so characteristic a fashion above the other Reformers. Calvin was grateful through his whole life for the benefits he had received in the home of his noble patron. In the introduction to his first work, dedicated to one of the sons of this family, the Abbot of Saint-Eloi at Noyon, Calvin writes: "To you I owe all that I have and am, and with grateful heart I recall the time when as a boy in your house, I was permitted to engage in the same studies with you and to receive from you and your worthy family the first leading to right knowledge and life." The recollection of this family seems to be the only real pleasant memory that remained out of the days of his early boyhood.

"From the time that I was a child, my father had intended me for theology," he says. To this end he was sent at the age of thirteen to Paris, the great gathering place of the world in those days for the study of divinity. In the College de la Marche he came under the influence of Mathurin Cordier and received from him an enduring love for humanistic studies. He advanced rapidly and was transferred to the College de Montague, the same school at which later Ignatius Loyola laid the foundations for his culture. He proved to be a brilliant student, speedily outstripping all his competitors in grammati-

cal studies, and by his skill in dialectics giving fruitful promise of that excellence as a reasoner which he afterwards displayed. He was not altogether liked by his fellow students, as many incidents show. His timid character yet abrupt manner, his constant criticism of the habits and morals of his companions caused frequent discord. The young Picardian was called, because of his censoriousness, the "Accusative." Nevertheless he formed many close friendships in those early student days. A brilliant future seemed to lie before him in the clerical office. Through the influence of his father he obtained an appointment as chaplain at the altar of La Gèsine in the Cathedral of Noyon. A few years later this benefice was exchanged for others, the living of Marteville and the curacy of Pont-l'Évêque. These promotions seem to have pleased him. He received the tonsure. Though he was not ordained to the priesthood, he preached several sermons to the people.

Suddenly the whole plan for Calvin's career was changed. It was decided that he should study law instead of theology. Whether this decision was reached because as Calvin intimates, his father "observing how extensively the science of law enriched those who follow it withdrew him from the study of philosophy to that of jurisprudence," or because of difficulties which the father had at the time with the ecclesiastical authorities of Noyon, difficulties which eventually ended with his excommunication, in any case John Calvin was recalled from Paris and sent to the great law schools at Orleans and Bourges. He threw himself with characteristic ardor into the new studies as he had done into the old. So great was his desire for knowledge that he shortened the time for nightly rest. Beze writes that Calvin was accustomed at this period of his life after taking a very frugal supper to pursue his lucubrations until midnight and employ his morning hours in bed reviewing the studies of the preceding night. Teachers and students soon marvelled at his logical mind, his strong memory, the ease with which he grappled fundamental truths, the astonishing rapidity with which he wrote out the lectures and disputations

of his instructors in the most eloquent and accurate language. It was at this time that he lost much of his shy nature. He became more social and mingled more freely with a congenial circle of ambitious young men. He associated much with Francois Daniel, a talented young jurist of Orleans. Still he tells us: "I have always loved quiet and tranquillity, being by nature somewhat shy and timid." He seemed to regret everything that kept him from his study. Even the interruption which the serious illness of his father caused, he found hard to bear. In a letter written practically at the deathbed of his father his thoughts are upon his books and his friends.

The death of Calvin's father in 1531 brought another change to the plans of the young student. It appears he had studied law to please parental ambition rather than to gratify his own wishes. Immediately after his father's death he returned to Paris and threw himself into the study of the new learning, as Humanism was then called, with the result that in a short time he issued his commentary on Seneca's "*De Clementia*." He was barely twenty-three years of age when the volume was published. It showed extensive research, rare maturity of judgment and a high sense of moral values. It was seen that no ordinary literary critic had entered upon his career. He gave monarchs to see that not armies and treasuries but true friends and love of subjects won by clemency and justice were the safest weapons of state. So he aimed to make a name in the world of humanities, Reuchlin, Erasmus and Le Fevre became his ideals. Yet the time was not far distant in which the Reformer was to gain the victory over the Humanist. The commentary, "*De Clementia*" remained Calvin's only philosophical work. It appears that through this first attempt there came to him the conviction that his true calling lay in another sphere.

At some time in his twenty-second or twenty-third year a profound religious transformation took place in Calvin's life. Quite in contrast to the German Reformer, Calvin remained

silent about his transition from the Catholic Church. He speaks as though he had always been the same. Only twice, once in a letter to Cardinal Sadolet, and again in the preface to the "commentary on the Psalms"—does he refer to his conversion, and then only in a few words. "By a sudden conversion God subdued and reduced my heart to docility." This he wrote a quarter of a century later than the experience it describes. He leaves us entirely in the dark as to the circumstances under which the conversion occurred. No name, neither that of Olivetan, Volmar or Le Fevre, is mentioned in connection with it. There is no reference as to where and how the first real doubts rose in his soul, or how finally they conquered. A plausible explanation of the experience seems to be that there were at Paris, Orleans and Bourges men and women with whom Calvin was intimate, who had broken with churchly traditions, and whose life and courage Calvin greatly admired. His conscience would not permit him any longer to have his own conduct differ so widely from his convictions. During the pest he was obliged to take part in the service at Noyon, and was made to see as never before the inconsistency of his situation. The inner questionings which followed doubtless brought to a climax that which he terms his "sudden conversion." His turning was a complete one. He resigned all his ecclesiastical benefices. He grasped the new ideas with the full earnestness of one who was inwardly convinced that the whole force of his character was dependent upon them. Willingly he broke with a brilliant future which lay before him in the field of humanism. He was ready to make any sacrifice for the sake of being a missionary of his new religious convictions. Only religious interests now lay on his heart. The humanist became theologian. The Bible and the Church Fathers displaced the classics. The little evangelical congregation of Paris soon recognized what an important addition it had received in the new convert. Calvin took the most active interest in all their sessions. Before a year had passed the learned expositor of Seneca, in spite of his youth, had become

the central figure of the evangelical cause in Paris. "Now I was greatly astonished that, before a year passed, all those who had some desire for pure doctrine betook themselves to me in order to learn, although I myself had done little more than begin."

Calvin's zeal was not long confined within the congregation at Paris. His conversion came at a time most favorable to the Evangelical party. Not only at the University of Paris had the liberal tendency gained ground, but in court circles also a change had taken place favorable to the Reformation. Francis I., wavering between two tendencies, was determined at this time to cease his former rigor against those who accepted the new faith. His sister, Margaret of Navarre, had become the influential and cultured protectress of the Evangelical party. Nicholas Cop, Calvin's friend, had been elected rector of the university. In an address by Cop, which it was charged Calvin had inspired and written, sentiments of an undoubted evangelical character drawn from the New Testament, Erasmus and Luther were freely expressed. The wrath of the Sorbonne fell upon the young heretics. Cop and Calvin were compelled to flee from Paris.

Calvin found a home open for him at Angoulême, through the kindness of his friend du Tillet, a man of congenial tastes, whose splendid library was of great service to the young theologian. For his own safety it was deemed advisable for him to leave France entirely, so we find him in 1534 in Basel under an assumed name. Here he lived very quietly and made many important friendships, among whom were Viret, Bullinger, Farel and others. His influence for Protestantism here consisted not in public preaching but rather in the way of private influence and effective writing. His chief work in Basel was the completion and publication of the "Institutes of the Christian Religion," in the Latin language in 1536. It was but a skeleton of what it afterwards became. But it proved to be "the strongest weapon Protestantism had yet forged against the Papacy." It began with an exposition of the Decalogue,

the Apostle's Creed and the Lord's Prayer, and continued with a treatment of the sacraments, Christian liberty and the relation of church and state. There was prefixed to it the famous dedication to Francis I., "a bold proclamation solemnly made by a young man of six-and-twenty who assumed the command of Protestantism against its enemies, calumniators and persecutors." Again he became a wanderer on the face of the earth seeking rest and finding none. We find him in Italy at the Court of Ferrara, then back in Basel, in Paris once more, then on his way to Strassburg, when in the most unexpected way the whole plan of his life was changed.

Between the Jura Mountains and the Alps on the southern borders of beautiful Lake Lemman lies the ancient, picturesque city of Geneva, one of the oldest culture cities of western Europe, one of the most happily situated cities in the world, for centuries the place where French, German and Italian elements have been constantly mixed as in a crucible. Originally a free city, subject to its bishop, it had fallen under the dominating influence of the House of Savoy, which it shook off only after many struggles. When John Calvin entered Geneva that night in 1536 it was a decisive hour for him, for the city and for the Reformation. He found Geneva a "tottering republic"; he made it a city of God after his own pattern, and a fortress for Protestantism. "I had intended to pass quickly by Geneva, without staying longer than a single night in that city," he writes. "A person who knew me made my presence known to others. Upon this Farel, who burned with an extraordinary zeal to advance the Gospel, immediately strained every nerve to detain me. After having learned that my heart was set upon devoting myself to private studies, for which I wished to keep myself free from other pursuits, and finding that he gained nothing by entreaties, he proceeded to utter an imprecation, that God would curse my retirement and the tranquillity of the studies which I sought, if I should withdraw and refuse assistance when the necessity was so urgent. By this imprecation I was so stricken with terror that I

desisted from the journey which I had undertaken." It was the crucial hour of his life when Calvin accepted the call to the ministry of the Evangelical Church of Geneva. He was young, full of high ideals, inexperienced, unacquainted with men, yet determined to do his duty. He saw that Geneva with its mixed population, with its southern blood, with its turbulent, quarrelsome life, needed a reformation of morals. In company with Farel he entered into a life and death struggle for the realization of the reign of God in that city. He set to work to organize the church and to reform the mind and manners of the community by positive enactments. He formulated a confession of faith and a catechism which was accepted and approved by the councils, and sworn to be maintained by the inhabitants of the city. He presented to the councils a form of order and discipline for the Church of Geneva in which it was demanded that the Lord's Supper be celebrated frequently, that psalms be sung, that the youth be regularly instructed, that papal marriage laws be abolished, that public order be maintained and unworthy communicants be excluded. The excommunication from the privileges of communion was insisted upon to protect the purity of the church. Calvin wanted to restore Apostolic conditions. To this end he insisted on strict discipline. The magistrates were only too willing to help in its maintenance. Gamblers were pilloried; women were imprisoned for exaggerated head dress; to wear clothes of a forbidden stuff was a crime; to give a feast to too many guests was a crime, to dance at a wedding was a crime. No sick man might lie in bed three days without sending for the minister of the parish. Prosecutions were plentiful. The people submitted for a time, but it became impossible to enforce the laws, and the council was brought into contempt. The patriots or libertines as they were called rose in rebellion against these drastic proposals and stormy scenes followed. In the election of 1538 the anti-clerical party won. But the preachers persisted in their demands for reform. They were warned not to interfere in the politics of the city. In their



reply they attacked the council from the pulpit, Calvin denouncing it as the "Devil's Council." On Easter Sunday, before large congregations, they declared that they could not administer communion to the people of this rebellious city, lest the sacraments be desecrated. They further declared that they would not use the ceremonies of Bern in the communion at Geneva as the council had commanded them to do. During the next few days both the Little Council and the Council of Two Hundred met, deposed Farel and Calvin, and ordered them to leave the city. "Very well," said Calvin, "it is better to serve God than man. If we had tried to please men, we should have been badly rewarded, but we serve a higher master, who will not withhold from us his reward."

As five years before Angoulême had taken up the exile from Paris, so now in a similar way Strassburg was to heal the wounds made by Geneva. At the earnest solicitation of Bucer, the chief Reformer of that city, Calvin found a refuge in free, imperial Strassburg, on the Upper Rhine. Here he spent three of the most useful and agreeable years of his life. He found faithful, sympathetic friends in Bucer, Capito and Herdio. On every side he was treated with a respect that he had not experienced before. The presence of a large number of French refugees made him feel as though he had not left the land of his own speech. He felt so much at home that during the very next summer he became a citizen of Strassburg. Not the least point of attraction was that here he was to start a home of his own. In the marriage of Idellette de Bure, widow of one of Calvin's Anabaptist converts who had died some time before of the plague, Calvin found a wife who was indeed the faithful helper of his ministry and with whom he lived on terms of cordial affection until the day of her death, nine years later. Calvin's sojourn in Strassburg was a blessing to him in many respects. It broadened his horizon, it deepened his thought, it enriched his experience, it was like a new school. These three years were necessary in order to

make of him the powerful reformer and lawgiver who was to return to Geneva in the autumn of 1541.

His duties in Strassburg were countless. He was first of all preacher and pastor of the French refugee church. He preached four times every week. He found great joy in the pastoral care of his flock. He had free scope to form a model French church whose ordinances were to be an ideal for all the congregations of his native country. He again laid great stress on church discipline. In every letter written from Strassburg to Farel he deals with this question. He carefully guarded the Lord's Table against the unworthy. There was opposition, but Calvin remained firm, and finally built up a prosperous, well-organized congregation that became the wonder and admiration of the community. With the activity of pastor, Calvin combined the position of teacher of theology at the university. "Against my own will Capito has forced me to it. Now I preach and lecture every day." Of more importance however than his preaching or his lectures, his disputations or his conversion of Anabaptists was his literary work. For this tireless worker found time for the exercise of extensive literary activity in the midst of all his many duties in Strassburg. During the Genevan experience his literary talent had lain dormant. His catechism was the only product of those troublous years. But now he took up the thread again. First he revised and enlarged the "Institutes"; then published "The Exposition on Romans," one of the most important of his exegetical works; of a more popular nature, written in the language of his own people, was the "Little Tract on the Lord's Supper"; then followed his "Liturgy," and the famous "Letter to Sadoleto." Not without significance is the fact that in Strassburg, too, Calvin got a glimpse of the German world, and was thrown into close relationship with Melancthon, joining him in several colloquies for the healing of the divisions caused by the Reformation. It was at the Colloquy of Worms that Calvin became known by his strong disputation as "The Theologian."

During Calvin's absence of three years, disorder and irreligion had wrought havoc in Geneva. Cardinal Sadoletto taking advantage of the disturbed condition of the city sent an appeal to the Genevese asking them to return to the Roman Church and to restore papal supremacy in the city. But Calvin, still watchful over his ungrateful flock, frustrated this design by writing such a reply to Sadoletto as made him desist from all further efforts. Then the united voice of the councils, the ministers, and the people of Geneva pled for Calvin's return. The invitation signed by the authorities of the city reads: "On behalf of our Little, Great and General Councils (all of which have strongly urged us to take this step) we pray you very affectionately that you will be pleased to come over to us, and to return to your former post and ministry, and we hope that by God's help this course will be a great advantage for the furtherance of the holy Gospel, seeing that our people very much desire you, and we will so deal with you that you shall have reason to be satisfied." Bucer and the people of Strassburg expressed their unwillingness to part with Calvin. He himself shrank from the abyss, as he called it. "There is no place in the world," he wrote, "which I fear more, not because I hate it, but because I feel unequal to the difficulties which await me there." "It were far better for me to go to the cross and die at once than to drag out my life in that place of martyrdom." "But when I remember," he wrote to Farel, "that in this matter I am not my own master, I present my heart as a sacrifice and offer it up to the Lord." On September 13, 1541, he returned to the city from which he had been banished three years before, and henceforth Calvin belonged to Geneva and Geneva to him.

He felt that God had called him back to Geneva to make of it a model Christian community. To this end, he at once asked the Little Council to appoint a committee to prepare a constitution for the Church. The result was the famous Ecclesiastical Ordinances of Geneva. The duties of the four officers of the Church, pastor, teacher, elder and deacon, were

fully described. Especially was emphasis laid on the eldership as the chief disciplining office of the Church. The consistory composed of elders and ministers was the heart of the system. Yet its functions were independent of those of the civil government. Complete separation of church and state was maintained. The consistory could only admonish and warn; the council alone could sentence. Still the consistory, chosen by the smaller council on the advice of the ministers was hardly more than a committee of the councils themselves. So that the separation of civil and ecclesiastical functions was more apparent than real. There is no denying the fact that the exercise of discipline was often petty and unnecessarily severe, that it savored of austerity and belonged to the Levitical code rather than to the Gospel of Jesus. The worse than Draconian severity of the punishments inflicted caused for a time a holy reign of terror in Geneva. The official documents of the councils of 1541-1559 show an enormous list of censures, fines, imprisonments and executions. For ten long years Calvin struggled to establish his system of discipline. He held no civil office but he was the real ruler. The Libertines, in whom the old spirit of Genevese freedom was not quite dead, constantly opposed him, and many a one paid for his opposition at the price of his life.

As to the condition of regenerated Geneva, opinions differ. Some tell us that the rigid and minute discipline of the consistory simply drove sin beneath the surface, and again excited it to bravado; that "at no period was immorality more deep seated than when it was covered over with the thickest varnish of religious observance." Others contend that Geneva to external appearances at least was not a poor and mechanical imitation of the city of God, but a regenerate city indeed, distinguished above all Christian communities of the sixteenth century for moral and religious prosperity. Even the material welfare of the city was not neglected. Sanitary conditions were improved; great cleanliness promoted; new industries started; schools reorganized; daily sermons instituted in

each church of the city. John Knox wrote to his friend Locke from Geneva: "This is the most perfect school of Christ that ever was in the earth since the days of the Apostles. In other places I confess Christ to be preached; but manners and religion so seriously reformed, I have not yet seen in any place besides."

Among the many controversies which entered into Calvin's life during his second sojourn in Geneva, including conflicts with Pighius, Bolsec, Castellio and others, the most memorable one was that connected with the brilliant Spanish doctor, Servetus. This man had spoken in terms needlessly offensive on the doctrine of the Trinity. At his trial Calvin appeared as the accuser. After a long, keen, bitter contention, Servetus was condemned to be burnt to death, and the sentence was executed near Geneva, October 27, 1553. Calvin has been severely condemned for bringing about, or, at least, for not trying to avoid the execution of this sentence. He has been accused of a desire to give the world at large and the Papacy in particular an assurance of the fact that heresy was no more to be tolerated in Geneva than in Rome. That in the light of our twentieth century spirit of toleration Calvin was in error, will admit of no gainsaying. He did, however, use his influence to have the sentence that had been pronounced against Servetus mitigated, by having death by the sword substituted for that of burning. What can be justly charged against him is that he took the initiative in the trial, that he prosecuted it with undue severity and that he approved the sentence that condemned Servetus to death. Toleration was an obscure virtue in the sixteenth century. Even Melancthon and the Swiss churches approved the sentence of Servetus. Coleridge suggests that the tragedy of Servetus was so in accord with the spirit of the age that it was not Calvin's guilt especially but "the common opprobrium of all European Christendom."

By 1555 Calvin had gained complete control of Geneva. The last public enemy that he overcame were the Perrinists.

It appears that Geneva was fast becoming the city of refuge for the oppressed Protestants of Europe. The Perrinists represented the old Genevan citizenship and began to object to the augmenting force of the refugees in the community. A street brawl was magnified by the authorities into a conspiracy; the Perrinist leaders were brought to trial; some escaped, others were thrown into prison and cruelly tortured, still others were executed. This gave Calvin supreme control of the city. The last serious opposition to his rule had been destroyed. The work which he had set about to perform in 1541 was accomplished. For nine years longer he lived to enjoy in peace the fruits of his victory. Much of this time he spent in adding religious education to his work of preaching and disciplining. In 1559 he founded a college and later added an academy, now the University of Geneva. Its first rector was Théodore de Bèze. From its walls there went forth as students men like Olevianus, Chrestien, Thomas Bodley and John Knox. On February 2, 1564, he lectured for the last time in the academy, and on May 27 of that same year he died, being not yet fifty-five years of age. Though a monument bearing the initials J. C. has been placed in the cemetery of Plain-Palais, the place of his burial remains to this day unknown.

Bèze tells us that Calvin was of middle size; his complexion dark and pale; his eyes brilliant even in death. In a famous picture, the last work of Ary Scheffer, Calvin is seen sitting at his desk in his customary attitude, pen in hand, book open before him. His forehead is not high but of the mould that betokens an iron will. His thin long, black beard reaches down to his breast. Sitting there in his long black robe on which there is not a speck of dust, for he was scrupulously tidy, he makes the impression of personified earnestness, determination, order and power. His body was said to have been pure nerve and bone, fitting outward expression of his inner life, whose chief lack was flesh and blood. But he had the bone, nerve and sinew not only of body, but also of mental,

moral and spiritual life. While he lacked the artistic imagination and the richness of heart of Luther, everything in him suggested the logician who avoids the superfluous and carries ideas directly to ultimate conclusion even though that conclusion be a *decretum horribile*. He had an acute and penetrating intellect, a wonderful faculty for assimilating ideas. As a lecturer he was brilliant. There was not much time for preparation. He never brought anything to his desk but the simple text of Holy Scripture. He did not dictate but spoke freely according to the needs of the moment, yet his discourse was always clear and well ordered so that there seemed to be little difference between the style of the speaker and the writer.

He was a living conviction. The logic of his thought was only the formal side of his life. The far richer and deeper side was the logic of his conscience and of his will. This is the keynote of his comparatively simple character. His life is all of a piece. As soon as one sees the foundations, the rest follows. For him to know was to will and to do. It was impossible for him to compromise, to trim or to go half-way in any measure. By nature shy, introspective, fearful of conflict, when convinced that the will of God demanded a course of action, no further argument was needed. To know and to bring about God's will in himself and in others was the inner motive of his far-reaching work, the secret of his iron power and of his ceaseless activity. The main thing for him was the Majesty of God and the omnipotence of the Divine decree fixing the unalterable succession of events, and rigidly determining the eternal fate of men. In connection with this he had the intense assurance of his own election unto life in God. He was impressed with the significance of his own person and work, constantly comparing himself to King David, believing that he was the chosen instrument of God, that God's presence never left him for a moment, and that every insult to him affected God. This conviction gave a certain majesty to Calvin's character. The council



of Geneva spoke of "his character of great majesty, a majesty, which God had impressed upon him." Calvin's Old Testament conception of God was his strength and at the same time his weakness. In all his prayers he never addresses a Heavenly Father, always the Almighty King. If as Henry suggests "the world needed a new Sinai, a second Moses and a second Elias," Geneva certainly found one in the Lawgiver Calvin.

In his daily life however he was also a disciple of Jesus. His life was not all violence. He was humble, devout and pure. Never was a man more willing to serve his fellow men. He would leave the leading of congregations and empires to look after the needs of his friends. His home was the asylum for needy pilgrims. Frequently from ten to fifteen refugees were quartered under his roof for weeks at a time. He was always poor in spite of a good income, using his means for church purposes and especially for church emigrants. He once wrote to the Queen of Navarre that he had not a penny left to buy bread for himself. He could be tender as well as stern. His letters are filled with evidences of sympathy. In his iron breast he carried a warm heart. The tender qualities of his nature are seen at their best in his home life, in his relation to his friends, and in the letters he wrote on the death of his wife and his only child.

His labors were incessant. He was like a bow that is always bent. "There is never any season throughout the year," he writes, "in which I have not my work cut out for me, and more indeed than I could well get through, even although I were a tolerable tailor." He speaks of the "forest of material" awaiting arrangement. His correspondence was enormous. He sent letters in every direction in Europe, to kings, princes, reformers, theologians, humanists, burdened souls, poor women and religious prisoners. Councils and diets, leagues and alliances made demands upon his time.

Collodan wrote: "It is doubtful if any man of our time has to hear more, answer for more, and write more, and that of the

most important things than Calvin." The sum of his expositions and lectures is amazing. He wearied his amanuenses with his ceaseless dictation. He drove with a high hand religion, ethics, politics, literature, teaching, preaching and the writing of extensive theological works. He gave character and direction to every phase of church activity. His study was the center of the most important political counsels. Like Hildebrand he combined the zeal of an Old Testament Prophet with the sharp insight and spirit of a statesman. His state papers naturally signed by the syndics and the councils are masterpieces. He stood related to all the ecclesiastical or political parties of Europe either personally or by correspondence. All phases of life in Church and State were before him at every moment. He had risen to the height of a commanding figure in Europe. After the death of Luther, it was Calvin who represented the Reformation in the eyes of Pope, Emperor and people. So he bent upon his tasks, with his frail debilitated body, living to work and working only to establish the Kingdom of God upon the earth.

Of his moral courage there has never been any question. He wrote to the Queen of Navarre: "A dog barks and stands at bay if he sees any one assault his master. I should be indeed remiss if, the truth of God thus attacked, I should remain dumb, without giving one note of warning." "I have been in derision saluted of an evening with forty arquebuse shots before my door. How think you that must have astonished a poor scholar, timid as I have ever been?" Yet, "I exhorted them," he says elsewhere, "if they designed to shed blood, to begin with me." He was not afraid to speak fearlessly to Pope or Emperor. Yet his temper was irenic, for it was through Calvin that the "Reformed Church became less antithetical to the Lutheran, and the Lutheran leaders better understood among the Reformed."

He was not only an important religious, moral, and political influence, but his work counted for much in French Literature. His influence upon the French language was perhaps

less than that of Luther upon the German, it was certainly more than that of Tyndale upon the English. He gave French prose a character of precision and simplicity that it has never lost. As much as any one man of his race, he has helped to make the French tongue a literary medium for profound philosophical and religious discussion. He showed that the French tongue was capable of gravity as well as of levity. Frenchman though he was, he was also the only one of the great Reformers who can justly be called international. His work carried with it a universal character. His influence was felt in every country in Europe.

He was the supreme constructive genius of the Reformation. He not only gave to Protestantism a system of thought as logical as the Roman Church had in the system of Aquinas, but also an order of church polity which combined the scattering forces of the Reformation and fortified them against the powerful organization of the Roman hierarchy on the one hand and the destructive tendencies of sectarianism on the other. Which of these two things is it that has given him a chief title in the history of religion and civilization, is it the system of thought called Calvinism or the Church that he organized? We believe it is the latter. His system of thought is certainly less original and the ideas in it more derivative than his form of Church organization. For the master problem before Calvin was how to make a whole society not only Reformed in faith but also reformed in character. How to "secure the expression of changed faith in a changed life;" or rather how the Church could be made "not simply an institution for the worship of God, but an agency for the making of men fit to worship Him." While his solution had its defects in so far as it forgot that all healthy moral action must be spontaneous, nevertheless he made an heroic effort at the solution of the greatest human problem and deserves the gratitude of modern religion and civilization.

Few men have been so misunderstood, so maligned, so hated as Calvin. He has been called the best-hated man in history.

An old proverb ran: "Better be in hell with Bèze than in heaven with Calvin." Yet he is also one of the most admired men of history. The tributes paid to him by men of every nation and every profession are simply astounding. Bèze says of him: "I have been a witness of Calvin's life for sixteen years and I think I am fully entitled to say that in this man there was exhibited to all a most beautiful example of the life and death of the Christian which it will be as easy to calumniate as it will be difficult to emulate." Scaliger, the greatest scholar of his age, said: "Calvin stands alone as a theologian." Montesquieu wrote: "The Genevese should bless the birthday of Calvin." Kampschulte, the Catholic historian, calls him "the Aristotle of the Reformation," and Renan says of him that "he was the most Christian man of his century." Bancroft assures us that in a high sense Calvin is indeed the father of the French Huguenots, English Puritans, Scotch Covenanters, and the New England Pilgrims who not only sacrificed the world for the liberty of conscience, but who brought across the seas "the doctrines of civil liberty, which sheltered their infancy in the wilderness and within the short space of two centuries infused themselves into the life-blood of every rising state from Labrador to Chili." The Calvin who through religious zeal committed constant violence against the rights of conscience and of liberty was yet beyond a question one of the chief agencies in bringing about the establishment of the free institutions of modern civilization.

Reformer, theologian, legislator, humanist, organizing genius, master of men, majestic in character, great in the fear of God, exponent of law and liberty, faithful servant of his day and generation, John Calvin was one of the supreme forces of the sixteenth century and, through the sixteenth century, of modern times. In the day when men shall be ranked, not according to their defects, but according to their fidelity to God and to the right as God gave them to see the right, few there will be standing higher than he. What Luther wrote of Melancthon is even more true of John Calvin, "the whole Christian world is his debtor."

## II.

### CALVIN AS AN INTERPRETER OF THE BIBLE.

BY PROF. IRWIN HOCH DE LONG, D.B., PH.D.

This paper simply aims to bring before the reader some representative judgments pronounced on Calvin as an interpreter of the Bible, to indicate the extent of Calvin's work as a Biblical interpreter, to state his theory of interpretation, and to note some general characteristics of his work in this department of theology.

It has been said that if Luther was the king of translators, Calvin was the king of commentators. As an interpreter of the Bible Calvin is quite generally praised by historians of Biblical interpretation,<sup>1</sup> and by others who have written about him as an interpreter. There are however those among recent writers, not to speak of earlier writers, who, viewing Calvin's interpretation according to present day standards, speak of Calvin, by implication, as "surely disqualified for the high business of interpretation." He is charged with intolerance,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The works on the history of interpretation of the Bible are soon enumerated. They are these: Richard Simon, "Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament" (I have the "nouvelle edition, et qui est la premiere imprimée sur la Copie de Paris, augmentée d'une Apologie generale et de plusieurs Remarques Critiques," bearing the date 1685); Gottlob Wilhelm Meyer, "Geschichte der Schrifterklärung seit der Wiederherstellung der Wissenschaften," 1802-1809; F. W. Farrar, "History of Interpretation," 1886; and George H. Gilbert, "Interpretation of the Bible, A Short History," 1908. Gilbert's work is distinctly popular, while Farrar's work is addressed to a narrower circle; Gilbert's work is a book suitable to place in the hands of interested laymen, while Farrar's work is for the technically trained theologian.

<sup>2</sup>"On l'insulte lui-même; on l'outrage quand on élève la voix contre la sienne; et ce qu'il respecte le moins dans ses adversaires, c'est précisément cette liberté de penser qu'il revendique pour lui-même ou plutôt,—car j'ai tort de parler de liberté de penser, ce sont les droits de 'la conscience errante,' puisqu'il est toujours, lui, Calvin, en possession de la vérité." *Revue des Deux Mondes*, October, 1900, in an article "L'œuvre Littéraire de Calvin," p. 906.

with sophistry,<sup>3</sup> with "a mechanical view of inspiration, a subordination of Scripture to the doctrines of the Church, and a failure to give preëminence to the revelation of God in Jesus,"<sup>4</sup> and with "a serious lack of historical insight."<sup>5</sup> "When an honest man, after a careful study of the first three evangelists, declares that they write 'with the most perfect agreement,' it is obvious," says Gilbert in speaking of Calvin, p. 212, "that he does not understand that whereof he speaks."

Reuss, one of the foremost editors of Calvin's works in the "Corpus Reformatorum" and himself an epoch-making Biblical scholar, says of Calvin that he was "ohne alle Frage der grösste Exeget des sechszehnten Jahrhunderts."<sup>6</sup> Farrar in his "History of Interpretation" which continues to be the most satisfactory work in English on the history of Biblical interpretation, says: "But the greatest exegete and theologian of the Reformation was undoubtedly Calvin." In an article on "Calvin as an Expositor,"<sup>7</sup> written before the publication of his "History," Farrar writes as follows: "In modern times he (Calvin) has been generally and justly regarded as the greatest exegete of the age of the Reformation. His commentaries are at the present day far more frequently consulted, and are indeed better worth consulting, than those of Melancthon, Zwingli, or even Luther. They still live, while those of Musculus, Chytræus, Brentius, Bugenhagen, Baldwin, Bullinger, Beza, Mercer, Camerarius, and a host of other Reformation Expositors, are for all practical purposes dead." In the same article, concluding the paragraph from which the above quotation is taken, Farrar says: "But the fact remains that he (Calvin) was beyond all question the greatest exegete

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 910. "C'est ainsi que Calvin, tantôt en brouillant habilement les termes, et tantôt en s'arrogeant sur ses adversaires la supériorité de l'insulte, excelle, non seulement à déplacer les questions, mais vraiment à en dénaturer le sens; et aussi, comme on le voit, les questions, après comme avant son argumentation, demeurent-elles entières."

<sup>4</sup> Gilbert, "Biblical World," vol. 27, p. 347.

<sup>5</sup> Gilbert, "Interpretation of the Bible," p. 211.

<sup>6</sup> "Unquestionably the greatest exegete of the sixteenth century."

<sup>7</sup> "The Expositor," 1884, pp. 426-444.

of the Reformation Age, which produced greater exegetes than all the long preceding centuries." Bayle in his "Dictionnaire Historique et Critique" (1697), a valuable work for information among other things on Old Testament Science, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, says of Calvin: C'étoit un homme à qui Dieu avoit conseré de grans talens, beaucoup d'esprit, un jugement exquis, une fidelle memoire, une plume solide, éloquente, infatigable, un grand savoir, un grand zèle pour la verité,<sup>8</sup>—the exact qualities necessary to make a good interpreter of the Bible. "Joseph Scaliger, qui," so continues Bayle, "ne trouvoit presque personne digne de ses loüanges ne se lassoit point de l'admirer. Il le loüoit entre autres choses de n'avoir pas commenté l'Apocalypse."<sup>9</sup> In note N Bayle then continues: "Il (Scaliger) le reconnoissoit neanmoins pour celui de tous les Commentateurs qui avoit le mieux attrapé le sens des Prophetes. *O quam Calvinus bene assequitur mentem Prophetarum! nemo melius.* Puis donc qu'il ajoûte, *Sapit quod in Apocalypsim non scripsit*, c'est-à-dire il a eu ben nez de n'avoir pas entrepris l'Apocalypse; il falloit qu'il crût qu'il n'y avoit rien à faire sur ce livre."<sup>10</sup> Schaff, himself a Biblical interpreter of renown, in an article on *Calvin as a Commentator*<sup>11</sup> praises him as follows: "Calvin was an exegetical genius of the first order. His commentaries are unsurpassed for originality,

"He was a man upon whom God had conferred great talents, a high degree of intelligence, an exquisite judgment, a faithful memory, a pen instructive, eloquent, unwearied, great knowledge, and a great zeal for the truth."

"Joseph Scaliger, who scarcely finds any one worthy of his praise does not grow tired of admiring Calvin. He praises him among other things for not having written a commentary on the Apocalypse."

"Scaliger acknowledges that Calvin of all commentators had best seized the meaning of the prophets. How excellently Calvin has laid hold of the meaning of the prophets! No one more so than he. Then he adds, He was wise for not writing a commentary on the Apocalypse, i. e., he was sagacious enough not to undertake the Apocalypse; he must have felt that he could not do anything with this book."

<sup>11</sup> *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, July, 1892, pp. 462-469. This article is a reprint, omitting the foot-notes, of § 111, "Calvin's Commentaries," in Vol. VII., "History of the Christian Church."



depth, perspicuity, soundness, and permanent value." A little later on in the same article Schaff, as Scaliger before him, praises Calvin for not commenting on the Apocalypse by saying that he wisely left it alone. "Few exegetical works," says Schaff, in the same article, "outlive their generation; those of Calvin are not likely to be superseded, any more than Chrysostom's "Homilies" for patristic eloquence, or Bengel's "Gnomon" for pregnant and stimulating hints, or Matthew Henry's "Exposition" for devotional purposes and epigrammatic suggestions to preachers."

Diestel in his standard work, "Geschichte des Alten Testaments" (1869), writes concerning Calvin as an interpreter of the Bible: "Johannes Calvin ragt ebensowohl durch den Umfang seiner exegetischen Arbeiten wie durch eine seltene Genialität in der Auslegung hervor; unübertroffen in seinem Jahrhundert, bieten seine Exegesen für alle folgenden Zeiten noch bis heute einen reichen Stoff der Schrifterkenntnis dar. Am werthvollsten sind seine eigentlichen Commentare über den Pentateuch, Jesaja und Psalmen, der letztere sein Meisterwerk; practisch bedeutsam sind seine nachgeschriebenen Vorlesungen über die kleinen Propheten, Daniel, Jeremia, Ezechiel, und seine Homilien über das Buch Hiob und I. Samuel." Not only does Calvin tower above all other interpreters of his time, but according to the same writer he is "der Schöpfer der ächten Exegese." Merx, a prominent Oriental and Biblical scholar, literally echoes Diestel's judgment, in his classical study on "Die Prophetie des Joel und Ihre Ausleger von den ältesten Zeiten bis zu den Reformatoren:" "Calvin ist der grösste Exeget seiner Zeit, aber nicht die entfaltete Gelehrsamkeit—denn in diesem Punkte ist er weislich haushälterisch—macht ihn zum Schöpfer der ächten Exegese 'sondern der tiefe Blick in das alleinige Ziel und die richtige Aufgabe aller Schrifterklärung, sowie die Thatsache, dass er derselben in seinen Arbeiten so bedeutend nahe gekommen ist, dass er sich von seinen Vorgängern specifisch unterscheidet.' Diestel S. 267." Winer in the first two editions of his commentary on

Galatians, did not even mention Calvin, while in the third he lauds him as follows: "Calvinus miram in pervidenda apostoli mente subtilitatem, in exponenda perspicuitatem probavit."<sup>12</sup> Others, like Poole in the preface to his *Synopsis*, excuse themselves for not more frequently referring to Calvin's interpretations on the ground that others have drawn on him so largely that to quote them is in reality to quote him! Tholuck, a prominent Lutheran theologian of the last century, mentions in his admirable essay on "Die Verdienste Calvin's als Ausleger der heiligen Schrift" ("Vermischte Schriften," Part II., pp. 330-360), these two qualities as giving value to Calvin's interpretation of the Old Testament, doctrinal impartiality, and a vital religious feeling which his commentaries everywhere breathe and most beautifully in the Psalms.

Tholuck's interest lay mainly in the New Testament and hence the greater part of his excellent essay deals with Calvin's "New Testament Commentaries." According to Tholuck the New Testament commentaries are characterized by the same marks as the commentaries on the Old Testament. In speaking of the New Testament commentaries he especially commends Calvin's exegetical tact; the various learning upon which his interpretation rests, though not apparent on the surface; his deep Christian feeling whereby he apprehends the fundamental New Testament ideas and interprets the Scriptures with a psychology resting upon Christian experience.

Meyer, who knows how to value a knowledge of the original languages and thorough historical science says of Calvin in his "Geschichte der Exegese"<sup>13</sup> (1802-1809): "Calvin, too, as well as Zwingli, and even still more than he, would have the best founded claims upon our special estimation, even though he were less known by some particular interpretations which he first gave to various controverted passages, and which have served as models for his followers. Of this we may be

<sup>12</sup> "Calvin has displayed remarkable acuteness in perceiving, and in expounding the meaning of the apostle."

<sup>13</sup> Vol. II., p. 450 f.

convinced, especially from his interpretations of the Old Testament, which commends itself to us in a very unusual degree, not only by its great copiousness, and its extent over most of the Old Testament Scriptures, but still more by its very instructive contents. By the natural, and, for the most part successful, elucidation which he has given of the grammatical sense in general, by the valuable philological remarks which he has occasionally interspersed, and by the many peculiar explanations which he has suggested, he has sufficiently proved his capacity to apprehend the sense of the sacred records, and fully justifies us in ascribing to him a better acquaintance with the Hebrew language than R. Simon is inclined to allow him. And his further investigations respecting the sense, after it had been thus grammatically explained, whether in the historic, the poetic, or the prophetic parts, show us everywhere a man who, not satisfied with the traditional meaning, seeks out the historical relations of his author, and endeavors to penetrate more deeply into his spirit; so far, indeed, as his habits of thinking in theology, and his many doctrinal prepossessions, would allow him to do this."

Following these judgments on Calvin's Biblical interpretation, which were selected almost at random, and brought together without giving heed to any order, whether chronological or other, we indicate the extent of Calvin's work in this department. This can be done by enumerating his commentaries as they appear in English in the edition of the "Calvin Translation Society." They are as follows: "Commentary on Genesis," 2 vols.; "Harmony of the last Four Books of the Pentateuch," 4 vols.; "Commentary on Joshua," 1 vol.; "Commentary on the Psalms," 5 vols.; "Commentary on Isaiah," 4 vols.; "Commentary on Jeremiah and Lamentations," 5 vols.; "Commentary on Ezekiel," 2 vols.; "Commentary on Daniel," 2 vols.; "Commentary on Hosea," 1 vol.; "Commentary on Joel, Amos, and Obadiah," 1 vol.; "Commentary on Jonah, Micah, and Nahum," 1 vol.; "Commentary on Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Haggai," 1 vol.;

"Commentary on Zechariah and Malachi," 1 vol.; "Harmony of the Synoptical Evangelists," 3 vols.; "Commentary on John's Gospel," 2 vols.; "Commentary on Acts of the Apostles," 2 vols.; "Commentary on Romans," 1 vol.; "Commentary on Corinthians," 2 vols.; "Commentary on Galatians and Ephesians," 1 vol.; "Commentary on Timothy, Titus, and Philemon," 1 vol.; "Commentary on Hebrews," 1 vol.; "Commentary on Peter, John, James, and Jude," 1 vol.

The above 44 volumes do not contain his many sermons, "qui," according to Brunetière,<sup>14</sup> "ne sont qu'un commentaire perpétuel de l'Écriture sainte,—des leçons, à vrai dire, plutôt que des sermons." A similar judgment is pronounced on his sermons by Baumgartner: "On rencontre très fréquemment ce dernier (i. e., the commentator) sous la robe du prédicateur."<sup>15</sup> Of his sermons, which as a collection are thus characterized as exegetical lectures, there are said to be now in the library of Geneva 2025 in MS.<sup>16</sup> His most famous sermons are those on the book of Job, numbering 159. Admiral Coligny valued these sermons on Job so highly that he read one of them every morning and evening, and because he derived such great benefit from them he called them his "*panchrestum medicamentum*,"—a healing and soothing balm in all the vicissitudes of life. The sermons on the book of Samuel number 107. These sermons on Job and Samuel are printed in Latin in the nine volume Amsterdam edition of Calvin's

<sup>14</sup> P. 905, in the article, in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, cited above. Calvin's sermons are "only a *commentarius perpetuus* on Holy Scripture, lectures, to speak truth, rather than sermons."

<sup>15</sup> *Calvin Hebräisant*, 1889, p. 48. In the case of Calvin the commentator is very frequently met "under the robe of the preacher." Calvin quotes Hebrew in his sermons. Though the quoting of Hebrew in his sermons seems to be rare, yet it is real. See, for instance, the 70th sermon on the book of Job; also the 149th; the 150th; the 155th; the 156th; the 157th, etc.

<sup>16</sup> Compare, however, the following statement: "Ausserdem besitzt die Genfer Bibliothek 2023 grösstentheils ungedruckte Predigen vom Jahre 1549-60." Henry, p. xx. The statement in the text is derived from the article "Calvin," p. 40, in the "Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature," by McClintock and Strong.

works, under the general title "*Calvini opera*," by Schepfer. Apart from the sermons on the books of Job and Samuel, there are, of course, many others on other books and parts of the Bible. Let this suffice to indicate the amazing extent of Calvin's exegetical labors, covering almost the entire Bible, a task which hardly any Old Testament or New Testament scholar in America, England or on the continent of Europe, would be willing to undertake in our day.

In this connection it should be mentioned that the commentaries on Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the Twelve Minor Prophets are the result of *prælectiones* or *cours* delivered by Calvin to his students, and were "*recueillis de sa bouche*," like his sermons. Afterwards his students published them from their notebooks. This statement takes away some of the grandeur of the remarkable exhibition of the extent of Calvin's exegetical work. It also suggests the fact of the unequal character and value of the exegetical writings published under Calvin's name.

Calvin's theory of interpretation may be learned very readily, for he himself has given us his conception of the duty of an interpreter, or at any rate so expressed himself that his views may be readily inferred, in the preface to Romans, addressed to his friend Grynaeus, written at Strassburg, October 18, 1539, and in a letter to Viret, also written at Strassburg, May 19, 1540. In the former he says: "I remember that when three years ago we had a friendly converse as to the best mode of expounding Scripture, the plan which especially pleased you, seemed also to me the most entitled to approbation; we both thought that the chief excellency of an expounder consists in lucid brevity. And, indeed, since it is almost his only work to lay open the mind of the writer whom he undertakes to explain, the degree in which he leads away his readers from it, in that degree he goes astray from his purpose, and in a manner wanders from his own boundaries. Hence we expressed a hope, that from the number of those who strive at this day to advance the interest of theology by

this kind of labour, some one would be found, who would study plainness, and endeavour to avoid the evil of tiring his readers with prolixity. I know at the same time that this view is not taken by all, and that those who judge otherwise have their reasons; but still I cannot be drawn away from the love of what is compendious. But as there is such a variety, found in the minds of men, that different things please different persons, let every one in this case follow his own judgment, provided that no one attempts to force others to adopt his own rules. Thus it will be, that we who approve of brevity, will not reject nor despise the labours of those who are more copious and diffused in their explanations of Scripture, and that they also in their turn will bear with us, though they may think us too compressed and concise.

"I indeed could not have restrained myself from attempting something to benefit the Church of God in this way. I am, however, by no means confident that I have attained what at that time seemed best to us; nor did I hope to attain it when I began; but I have endeavoured so to regulate my style, that I might appear to aim at that model. How far I have succeeded, as it is not my part to determine, I leave to be decided by you and by such as you are."

Later on there follow some characteristic words on the sacredness of Biblical interpretation, and on the interpreter's necessary freedom from prejudice or any prepossession whatever. "And if it be deemed a great wickedness to contaminate any thing that is dedicated to God, he surely cannot be endured, who, with impure, or even with unprepared hands, will handle that very thing, which of all things is the most sacred on earth. It is therefore an audacity, closely allied to a sacrilege, rashly to turn Scripture in any way we please, and to indulge our fancies as in sport; which has been done by many in former times. . . . Since then what would otherwise be very desirable cannot be expected in this life, that is, universal consent among us in the interpretation of all parts of Scripture, we must endeavor, that, when we depart from

the sentiments of our predecessors, we may not be stimulated by any humour for novelty, nor impelled by any lust for defaming others, nor instigated by hatred, nor tickled by any ambition, but constrained by necessity alone, and by the motive of seeking to do good; and then, when this is done in interpreting Scripture, less liberty will be taken in the principles of religion, in which God would have the minds of his people to be especially unanimous."

In the letter to Viret Calvin pronounces judgment upon other Biblical interpreters in such a manner that his views concerning the duties of an interpreter may likewise readily be inferred. "Capito, in his lectures has some things which may be of much use to you in the illustration of Isaiah. But as he does not dictate any part to his hearers, and has not yet reached beyond the fourteenth chapter, his assistance cannot at present much help you. Zwingli, although he is not wanting in a fit and ready exposition, yet, because he takes too much liberty, often wanders far from the meaning of the prophet. Luther is not so particular as to propriety of expression or the historical accuracy; he is satisfied when he can draw from it some fruitful doctrine. No one, as I think, has hitherto more diligently applied himself to this pursuit than Ecolampadius, who has not always, however, reached the full scope or meaning."

One word characterizes Calvin's theory of interpretation. It is the somewhat awkward word *grammatico-historical*. This theory, of which he is called "the founder," is now quite generally acknowledged as the only valid theory of interpretation of the Bible or of any piece of literature. There is no occasion it seems to me, for shifting the emphasis and designating the theory *historico-grammatical*, as some in these latter days are inclined to do. The logical order of procedure is best expressed by the former term *grammatico-historical*. An undue emphasis upon the historical, to the neglect of the grammatical or linguistic side, is apt in these days of the comparative study of all things, religion and re-



ligious documents not excluded, to lead to imposition rather than to exposition, to eisegesis rather than to exegesis, to *Einlegung* rather than to *Auslegung*. The imposition into Scripture of comparative historical material is no more to be condoned scientifically than the imposition into Scripture of later dogmatic developments. The one method is doing as much violence to Scripture as the other. The historian must be held to a thorough knowledge of the sources; a second-hand knowledge of these can never answer for a firsthand knowledge. Therefore the contention is Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek first, as long as men, or the Church, want to know what the actual message of these men of God is.

Now from Calvin's theory of interpretation we pass and linger briefly with his practice of interpretation. Does his practice square with his theory? Or do we here have one of those not uncommon cases where the prolegomena promise one thing, while the body of the work brings almost anything but what was promised?

First as to brevity. In theory, lucid brevity is according to Calvin the chief excellency of an interpreter. According to Stähelin Calvin has accomplished the aim which he set for interpreters in this respect. Can we, however, rightly, from our standpoint, ascribe brevity to a commentator who writes five large octavo volumes, from four to almost six or seven hundred pages each, on Jeremiah and Lamentations, five volumes on the Psalms, four volumes on Isaiah, etc.? It seems that in interpretation we must, from our standpoint, even if not from the standpoint of his age, deny brevity to Calvin, though in general we are ready to acknowledge that his interpretation is lucid. This lucidity in part is due to his acknowledged neatness and precision in form and in language, both in Latin and in French. Even opponents of Calvin acknowledge the force of his style in both languages. In the history of the French language Calvin holds a position corresponding to that of Luther in the history of the German language. It would be interesting to know the judgment of his friend

Grynæus to whom, "and such as he was," Calvin referred this matter of brevity for decision.

The second point that we note in Calvin's theory of interpretation is contained in the following sentence, already quoted above: "And, indeed, since it is almost his (the interpreter's) only duty to lay open the mind of the writer whom he undertakes to explain, the degree in which he leads his readers from it, in that degree he goes astray from his purpose, and in a manner wanders from his own boundaries." How does his practice square with his theory in this respect? Calvin makes the impression of having honestly striven after this. He is methodical, giving attention to the context of a given passage. His aim is to explain each part by its relation to the whole. His theory is not to pick out passages from a given context and interpret these in their isolation. His theory as an interpreter is not that Scripture is a conglomerate incoherent mass of passages, that can be interpreted apart from the context. His practice is to explain the parts in relation to the whole, and the whole or entire context with reference to all its constituent parts.<sup>17</sup> In doing this he gives attention to syntactical construction, rhetorical figures, and verbal usages of his author; he had a good knowledge of Hebrew,<sup>18</sup> including a knowledge of Aramaic as also of Greek. Only after this is done is he prepared to give the meaning of the passage as a whole. This of course excludes the principle of allegory, of

"I am fully aware of the fact that Calvin frequently in his exegetical practice falls in with the proof-text principle of interpretation, in both the Old and New Testaments. His estimate of the Bible is largely that current in his time. The writers of the Bible are "scribes" of the Holy Spirit. Consequently the Bible is of a uniform character in doctrine. That there is a development in doctrinal conceptions or a progressive revelation, in the Bible, as the Christian church now quite generally admits, is not Calvin's view of Scripture.

"Richard Simon, p. 435, made a statement concerning Calvin's knowledge of Hebrew which is to-day on all sides rejected as untrue and some have rightly called it ridiculous ("geradezu lächerlich"). The statement is that Calvin scarcely knew the characters of the Hebrew alphabet—"qui n'en (i. e., of the Hebrew language) connoissoit gueres que les caractères." Simon's criticism on Calvin's interpretation of the Hebrew word כרת is however favored by modern comparative Semitic etymology.

a double, triple or quadruple sense of Scripture. His final conclusion often is valid even in this our own day, in spite of the fact that so much additional light from different quarters has been shed upon the Scriptures in our age. His theory is correct, though as applied by a properly equipped twentieth century interpreter the results obtained are often strikingly different from those of the sixteenth century co-laborer. The reason for this lies partly in his totally different conception of Scripture, and partly in the fact that he did not have at hand the present means of interpreting Scripture. Calvin did not have the advantages that the heir of his scientific principles enjoys to-day, and then too, like all the Reformers he had very strong dogmatic prepossessions which gave character, whether consciously or unconsciously, to his interpretation. What Calvin learned at Paris and subsequently from Augustine, from whom he professes in his Institutes<sup>19</sup> to be only a "faithful borrower," gave strong color to his interpretation of Scripture. In those days it was extremely difficult to be free from dogmatic prepossessions, just as in these days when the historical rather than the dogmatic spirit is dominant, it is difficult for many to be free from prepossessions of a comparative historical character.

Another feature that commends itself in Calvin's practice as an interpreter of the Bible is his independence. This indeed is apparent already in his theory, but the point here is that he was manly enough to practice his theory, after he was convinced of its soundness, even though in his hands it produced results that were not in accord even with his own conception or with his cause. Calvin abhorred the idea of "lying for God."

Consequently we are not surprised when we learn that Calvin acknowledges to a certain extent, at least, that the language of the Old Testament attributes to God human traits and passions. "And he (Moses) introduces God as speaking after the manner of men, by a figure which ascribes human

<sup>19</sup> Bk. III., chap. XXIII., § 13.

affections to God" (Gen. 6: 5). "*And the Lord shut him in.* This is not added in vain, nor ought it to be lightly passed over. That door must have been large, which could admit an elephant. And truly, no pitch would be sufficiently firm and tenacious, and no joining sufficiently solid, to prevent the immense force of the water from penetrating through its many seams, especially in an irruption so violent, and in a shock so severe. Therefore, Moses, to cut off occasion for the vain speculations which our own curiosity would suggest, declares, in one word, that the ark was made secure from the deluge, not by human artifice but by divine miracle" (Gen. 7: 16). "Moses here, in a homely style, declares that the Lord had undertaken the labour of making garments of skins for Adam and his wife" (Gen. 3: 21).

The Vulgate translation of Joel 1: 1 begins: "*Verbum Dei quod factum est ad Joel.*" Jerome and other patristic and medieval interpreters brought this idiom forward as an intimation of the Incarnation, as though it were synonymous with the statement "the Word was made flesh!" "For he (Jerome) feared lest Christ should be said to be made, as he is the word of the Lord." Calvin regards such comments as a discreditable play upon words and rejects the comment with the contemptuous word *nugæ*; *sunt nugæ magis quam pueriles*.

Calvin believed in the persecution, even execution of Unitarians or anti-Trinitarians. No one, not even his friends, would to-day release Calvin from his share in the "tragedy and crime" of executing the anti-Trinitarian Servetus. In 1903 (November 1) the Protestants of France and Switzerland erected an "expiatory monument" to the Unitarian Servetus. In an inscription on the monument these Protestants acknowledge their debt to the great Reformer, Calvin, but at the same time condemn his error as an error of his age. For the inscription on the monument see Lindsay, page 131, and for a picture of the monument, reproduced from a photograph, see Walker, opposite page 342. It was well to call this incident to mind to appreciate more fully Calvin's independence

as an interpreter of the Bible. He rejects a number of "dicta probantia" ("proof texts") that had traditionally been used against Arians, Socinians and others. Calvin regards it immoral to defend any particular "proof-text," because it is polemically useful. He saw no proof of the Trinity in the plural *Elohim* (Gen. 1: 1), nor in Abraham's three visitors (Gen. 18: 2), nor in the Trisagion (Is. 6: 3), nor of the divinity of the Holy Spirit (Ps. 33: 6). In John 10: 30, "I and the Father are one," he sees no ontological or homoousian oneness, but the oneness of will between Christ and the Father, an ethical oneness.<sup>20</sup> Compare also the remark on I. John 5: 7, "When it is said that three are one, reference is had, not so much to essence (essentia), as to consent (consensus)." Now I take it there were few in his age that held so firmly and tenaciously to the belief of the homoousian oneness of the Son with the Father,<sup>21</sup> and yet Calvin yields this traditional "dictum probans," which might have been of service to his cause. In Matthew 11: 11, ο μικρότερος "he that is but little in the Kingdom of heaven," was by the majority of Reformation writers referred to Christ; Calvin applies it to all Christians. Another important Reformation text, Mt. 16: 18, is referred to Peter as the rock, not in his own person, but as the representative of all believers, rather than to Christ (δευτικῶς), as Luther does. According to Calvin's position it would be the index finger of Luther or of the polemic inter-

<sup>20</sup> This is hardly a correct "laying open of the mind of the writer" of this Gospel. This writer teaches more than an ethical oneness between Christ and the Father. He teaches more than the Lordship of Jesus, he also teaches the Godship of Jesus. "My Lord and my God." Here the oneness between Father and Son is not simply an ethical oneness, but a oneness of essence, as modern, so-called advanced interpreters admit. Compare "Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments," under the general editorship of Johannes Weiss, on the fourth Gospel in general and on this passage in particular.

<sup>21</sup> I am not unmindful of the Arian charges brought against Calvin by Caroli. In controversy with Caroli Calvin refused to join him in assent to the three ancient symbols of the Church, by answering: "We swear in the faith of the one God, not of Athanasius, whose creed no true Church would ever have approved." Nevertheless, that Caroli's charges of Arianism are baseless is not doubted.

preters that points to Christ and not that of Christ Himself. The same virile independence characterizes also Calvin's interpretation of the Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament, and such as are quoted in the New Testament. If space would allow it we might begin with Genesis 3: 15, and follow him through the entire list. Indeed Calvin was charged with expounding "oracles about the Trinity and the Messiah in accordance with Jewish and Socinian views."

Thus far we have noted Calvin's independence in reference to the interpretation of individual passages. Much more might be brought forward, but enough has been given to show this characteristic of Calvin. Now his independence is apparent not only in reference to the interpretation of individual passages, but also in reference to that of entire books. This may briefly be illustrated by his attitude towards the question of authorship of individual books. Of the Epistle to the Hebrews he says: "I cannot be induced to acknowledge Paul as the author." Such judgments were not based on subjective grounds after the fashion of Luther, but on objective facts, on critical and philological data. The Second Epistle of Peter does not contain "the genuine phraseology of Peter."

Certain passages in the Bible he declares not genuine, he speaks of another as a gloss, admits the possibility of oversights or trivial errors in the Biblical writers. Such admissions are not in accord with the theory of verbal dictation or "a mechanical view of inspiration," unless they are regarded as oversights and errors in the course of transmission of the text.

The judgment pronounced upon the Biblical interpretation of Calvin naturally varies according to the viewpoint of him who judges. He who judges Calvin's interpretation from the standpoint of Calvin's age, and environment, remembering the character of what had been done in Biblical interpretation prior to Calvin's time, being not unmindful of the comparatively meagre helps available at the time in Hebrew Grammar and in Hebrew lexicography, will marvel, not only because

of its bulk and extent, but also because of its advance over previous work along this line, and because of its spirit, character, and high quality. It must ever be borne in mind that Calvin lived and wrote before the days of modern comparative Semitic grammar and lexicography, before the days of modern excavations in the Orient, in Egypt, in Babylonia and Assyria, in Palestine and northern Syria, in Asia Minor, and on the island of Cyprus, and before the days when the historical-religious spirit held the dominant sway in the realm of Biblical interpretation. Again, he who judges Calvin's interpretation in accordance with present day standards, "looking at it in the light of the present, for the benefit of the present, and not for the condemnation of the past," will keenly note its shortcomings, its almost total disregard of text critical matters, its lack of comparative Semitic grammar and lexicology, of literary criticism as we now know it, of comparative religion, and of archaeology, and its prevailing dogmatic rather than historical character. Nevertheless, after all is said, Calvin, by the almost universal consent of Protestants and Catholics alike, remains *the* Biblical interpreter of his century, a position which he also continues to hold as a theologian.

Calvin's interpretation in general is then a marked advance upon what had been done prior to his time, though it is of a strong dogmatic character which runs into the polemic as of course into the practical. For us, however, to go back to Calvin's commentaries on the Old Testament from the *Expositor's Bible*, edited by Nicoll, from the "*International Critical Commentary*," edited by Briggs, Driver and Plummer, from Marti's "*Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament*," from the "*Handkommentar zum Alten Testament*," edited by Nowack, from the "*Kurzgefasster Kommentar*," edited by Strack and Zöckler, from the "*Westminster Commentaries*," edited by Walter Lock, and from "*The New Century Bible*," edited by Adeney, is like going to another world. Calvin's commentaries have great value, and there seems to be a considerable demand for them in our



day, but there is no gainsaying the fact that they have been left far behind in the rapid progress of Biblical science. Calvin's principle of interpretation will however abide and is valid for all time. It is the only principle of interpretation that commends itself to a scientific interpreter, because it is grammatico-historical. Likewise does Calvin's didactic and religious fervor commend itself to the reader of such modern commentaries that professedly "are not intended to be homiletic or devotional."

LANCASTER, PA.

### III.

## CALVIN'S DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION.

BY REV. THEO. F. HERMAN.

The theological doctrine of predestination is a particular statement of the general conception of determinism. There are three aspects of this wider problem which confront and perplex the student of human thought, the metaphysical, the physical and the theological.

Metaphysical determinism proceeds from the axiomatic truth that every event must have a cause. That is its major premise, and from this law of causality it infers logically a scheme of absolute necessity in human action. The name applied to this metaphysical world view is Necessitarianism.

The second aspect under which the problem of determinism has been studied is the physical. Metaphysical determinism reasons deductively; it proceeds from the general to the particular; synthetically it lays down the universal law for the intelligent interpretation of life. Physical determinism is inductive. It lays claim to no oracular knowledge of the plan and purpose of a divine architect. It follows the Ariadne thread of scientific investigation as the only sure guide out of the labyrinth of speculation into the realm of knowledge. And reasoning thus, inductively, it ends where the first begins, viz., with determinism. It speaks in the vernacular, it translates metaphysics into physics, speculation into biology, mind into terms of matter, infinite cause into terms of cosmic force; your gray matter, the form of your chin and the formation of your forehead, these things, in the choice of which you have neither voice nor vote, determine your life. As you are made, it says, so you will act. Your moral disposition is the result of your organic structure.

And if in past eons a grain of sand somewhere, had changed its position somehow, you would not be what you are, nor do what you do. The proper name for this scientific evolutionary determinism is fatalism or positivism. It is the apotheosis of impersonal force, shaping the cosmic process without an intelligent purpose, and without an intelligible aim.

The metaphysical determinist and the scientific positivist agree in the facts of the case. Both represent mankind as acting of necessity, whether for good or evil, in distinction to acting freely, by an original motion of the will. But the metaphysician goes to synthetic philosophy for the reason of this binding necessity, while the positivist finds the sufficient explanation of the fatalistic determinism of the universe in the data of the analytical sciences.

The third aspect of the problem is theological predestinarianism. It is, of course, near kin to both metaphysical necessitarianism and scientific positivism. All three agree that history and human life is a nexus of cause and effect, and that the efficient cause is other than man. The verdict of all is that man is the actor but not the agent. But there is a profound difference between the two former and the latter. The predestinarian does not find the efficient cause of things in philosophy nor in science, but in revelation. His argument for necessity is built upon a particular fact, or facts, of which he has been informed by competent authority; not upon ratiocination nor upon scientific investigation.

Let it be clearly understood, therefore, that the problem of determinism is by no means exclusively or peculiarly a theological problem. Often, in the din of debate and in the clash of spirits, it has been tacitly assumed that predestinarianism is simply one of the many odious hallucinations of theologians. And the odium attaching in the popular mind to the general conception of determinism has been lavished quite exclusively upon the champions of its theological aspect. Swedenborg, for example, rejected the epistles of Paul. He says of them that, in the heavenly life, they have no internal sense. The

reason for his antipathy for Paul was that Swedenborg believed his epistles to be the source of Calvinistic predestination, which to Swedenborg was very odious. Calvin himself, and his adherents to the execrable doctrine of predestination, Swedenborg describes as living in a cave where the delight of their lives is to do each other harm. These calumniators of Calvin ignore the fact that the deterministic problem has engaged the critical acumen of the best minds of the world, and that, from the time of Heraclitus to Schleiermacher, Schopenhauer and John Fiske, many of the noblest thinkers have asserted that determinism, in one of its forms, is the only possible solution of the antimony that lies in necessity and free will.

Furthermore, just as determinism in its wider sense is not a theological dogma but one of the great riddles of the universe, yea its prize puzzle par excellence, so, in its narrower theological sense, predestinarianism is not confined to Calvinism. It may be said, I think, that, while most of the great preachers of the world were indeterministic in their theology, the majority of the great theologians have been determinists. The preacher addresses the conscience of mankind, and the conscience rebels against determinism. But the theologian seeks and finds the final unifying cause of all phenomena in an omniscient and omnipotent God, the author, ruler and finisher of all things. And such a God would seem to preclude the reality and scope of free will in man. Hence all the great redemptive religions of the world have a doctrine of necessity, some kind of predestinarianism. And who shall say that the final redemptive religion will be without it? Meanwhile simple justice to Calvin demands mention of the fact that all the great reformers of the Sixteenth Century held the doctrine of predestination as tenaciously, taught it as unequivocally and defended it as vigorously as he did.

And since the doctrine of predestination was held by all the great reformers it is reasonable to seek the cause of its simultaneous emergence, if not equal prominence, in Lutheran,

Zwinglian, Melancthonian and Calvinistic theology, not primarily in the subjective factor, the men who framed the system, but rather in the objective religious motives which overarched, and in the essential principles which underlay the reformation itself. These fundamental principles were, first, a deep sense of the total depravity of mankind and its consequent inability to choose and do the good; secondly, the assertion of the free grace of God in Christ over against the Roman doctrine of the meritoriousness of good works; and, finally, the recognition of a dictated and formally infallible Bible as the sole repository and teacher of divine truth.

Obviously, a system of theology built upon an anthropology that regards mankind as a *massa perditionis*, upon a soteriology which centers in the sovereignty of God, and upon a mechanical conception of the Bible must logically and inevitably issue in predestinarianism. For if it be granted that man is totally depraved, and so inert in sinful corruption that he is unable even to seize or appropriate the proffered salvation, then his salvation must needs be effected by an absolute intervention of the sovereign will of God, who converts, sanctifies and saves man in spite of himself and without his coöperation. Again, since experience teaches that the operation of this irresistible divine grace among men is *selective*, it follows necessarily that it must be *elective*. For evidently not all men are saved by the sovereign act of grace, and the reason for this particularism cannot be found in man, since all men are alike incapable of coöperation. Hence it must exist in God. The selective process in time must originate in the will of God, that is in his eternal election. Furthermore, if you postulate the free will of man you detract from the glory of God; and according to the scriptures the supreme end of creation is the manifestation of the glory of God. And if it revolts the natural mind and heart of man to acknowledge that God elects some to salvation and others to reprobation, then let man remember that only thus God can manifest the glory of his mercy and justice. This double

decree is inscrutable and inexplicable, but its operation is visible in history and experience, and its revelation is clear in the scriptures.

Such then were the speculative antecedents of reformation predestinarianism. Jointly the reformers were driven to it by their controlling sense of man's total depravity and his consequent inability to be saved except by the intervention of the sovereign grace of God; together they found it in Paul as interpreted by Augustine, and in Christ as interpreted by Paul. Granting their premises, the predestinarian conclusion follows with syllogistic inevitableness. The reformation doctrine of predestination may be false, but it is not fallacious. It is splendid reasoning, though it may be poor theology. The fault, if fault there be, lies not in its logic but in its premises.

And this historical explanation of the predestinarianism of the reformers suggests its historical justification and vindication. It is a doctrine than which none other lends itself so readily to mischievous caricature and malicious misrepresentation. To the modern mind the defects of its virtues are so palpable, and the whole system is so paradoxical that a superficial knowledge of it engenders perplexity and surprise that pious and thoughtful men should have conceived and maintained it. And yet, in its day, it was not only needed to counteract the Pelagianism, which was the official Roman theology, but it was also better than its theological antithesis. To overthrow the one-sided Pelagian theory of the efficient and sufficient agency of free will in the salvation of mankind, predestinarianism, with its extreme and exclusive emphasis on the divine factor in salvation, had its historical justification. The world moves in contrasts. The pendulum of thought swings from one extreme to the other. In the Sixteenth Century it swung from Pelagianism to Calvinism, and the *raison d'être* of extreme predestinarianism was the scholastic doctrine of the *liberum arbitrium* and *meritum*. And that explains the universal acceptance of the doctrine of predestination by the pious and earnest men of those days. It made its

appeal from a discredited church to a God, whom Calvinism made most real to the intellect and most authoritative to the conscience. Let us be very sure that Calvinism, which helped to make so many men just and strong, had its profound message from God in spite of its defects.

But while Calvin was not the only champion of the doctrine of predestination, it received, at his hands, its most systematic treatment. Zwingli held the doctrine of predestination in the abstract. In his theological system it remained a speculative thought without normative effect and without constitutive authority. Luther held the same doctrine with the inconsistency of genius, now surpassing Calvin himself in the severity of his views, and in the harshness of their statement, and now contradicting himself by asserting the universal efficacy of the atoning death of Christ. Luther's doctrine of salvation was based upon his religious experience. Faith was not an act of man, as the medieval theology taught, which God supported and aided by acts of grace and by the means and methods of salvation, but it was rather the immediate experience of an act of God by sinful man. In his *de servo arbitrio*, where Luther endeavors to justify and explain his religious experience dialectically, he rushes deeply into a deterministic supralapsarian doctrine of predestination. In language stronger than even Calvin ever used he asserts the unconditional predestination of all men to salvation or damnation. And then he seeks to evade the practical conclusions of this doctrine by introducing a dualism into the divine will, by distinguishing between the *deus absconditus* and the *deus revelatus*, i. e., the revealed will of God for the salvation of all men, and the concealed will which disposes of the salvation or condemnation of each individual. As late as 1537, twelve years after its first appearance, Luther expressly endorsed this essay of his, which has always been a stumbling block for his descendants.

Melanchthon wrote his *Loci Communes* in a sharply predestinarian spirit, even venturing boldly to answer affirmatively the



crucial question: *utrum deus mala faciat?* This was in 1521. But in 1527, when he wrote his commentary to the epistle to the Colossians, he had abandoned the paths of deterministic predestinarianism, and henceforth he interpreted the efficacy of divine grace ethically, emphasizing the cooperant activity of man.

Calvin was constitutionally unable to hold this great doctrine abstractly like Zwingli, or intermittently like Luther; nor was he mentally capable of imitating Melancthon's feat of theological legerdemain, viz., of modifying his predestinarian conclusions without a corresponding change of the anthropological and soteriological premises. When Melancthon moderated the rigor of his earlier predestinarianism without modifying the foundations upon which it was built, he thereby demonstrated the fact that in him, the heart, and not the head, made the theologian. Love triumphed over logic. Though unable conscientiously to change his premises, he refused to find in metaphysics the ultimate explanation of his religious experience. But in Calvin logic was paramount. Not simply the formal logic of the mind. That he possessed indeed in rare measure. And his juristic studies had not only strengthened the natural vigor of his mind, but they had also given him what might be called the juridico-dogmatic bent, viz., the idea of law became his norm for the interpretation of the abstract notions of theology. Calvin's logic, however, was more than intellectual vigor and sincerity. Intimately related to this was his moral integrity, the logic of conduct, the logic of the human will under the compulsive power of a tender conscience. His conscience energized his thought, and his thought informed his conscience. His conscience filled him with moral enthusiasm and his mind dug the channel for its operation.

Thus constituted, a man of clear intellect, severe conscience and imperious will, it was mentally and morally impossible for Calvin to accept the doctrine of predestination as scriptural, and yet to hold it in abeyance. What his vigorous intellect held to be the central truth of revelation his conscience com-

pelled him to make the determining principle of his religious life and of his theological system. And this, accordingly, is what Calvin did. With inexorable logic he proceeds from the terminus a quo to the terminus ad quem, from the ante-historical and pre-mundane act of predestination, through the fall, total depravity, absolute human inability, irresistible grace and perseverance of saints to the final dualistic denouement. Compared with other predestinarian systems, the superlative excellence of Calvinism lies in its logical consistency. His mind lays hold of the doctrine of predestination in its colossal nakedness, and, though his heart shrinks from the awful consequences, he unfolds the decretal system with inexorable and inerrant logic.

The chief, though by no means the only, source for a scientific study of Calvin's doctrine of predestination is his *Institutes*. Besides this fountal source, there are his polemical treatises in defence of predestination, his correspondence, the *Consensus Genevensis* and his first Genevan catechism, published in 1537. This catechism, intended for the instruction of the young, was an epitome of the doctrines accepted and demanded at Geneva. Here the doctrine of predestination was expressed more definitely and less discursively than in the *Institutes*. But one naturally seeks the authentic formulation of the doctrine of predestination not in controversial writings, nor in fragmentary letters, nor in consensus compromises but in his *Institutes*. In this marvelous manifesto of faith, the ablest systematic statement of doctrines produced during the age of the reformation, Calvin unfolds the cosmic program of God. With burning logic, his reason aflame with religious fervor, he sketches the movement of God through history, intent upon establishing His glory.

And in the *Institutes* it is especially the third book which contains Calvin's doctrine of predestination. It treats of soteriology, and under this general head Calvin devotes four chapters (Book 3: 21-24) to the statement, proof, defense and development of the doctrine of predestination. They are

marked by lucidity of style and fecundity of argument, drawn from scriptural and patristic sources, and wrought into a consistent and coherent system.

The first edition of the *Institutes* appeared in 1537. It contained only six chapters. Compared with the final edition of 1559, which contained 80 chapters, the first edition was merely a condensed and concise program of religious and moral reforms; while the last edition is a systematic representation and a keen interpretation of the Christian religion. And yet, germinally, Calvin's theology lay completely within the brief compass of the first edition. Beza's statement, that in doctrine Calvin made scarcely any change after the publication of the first edition of his *Institutes*, has occasioned much fulsome praise of Calvin's precocious genius, and much foolish condemnation of his premature dogmatism. Both the hostile scoffer and the servile worshipper of Calvin should realize that fixity in principle and finality in system are two distinct and separate things. Consistency from first to last does not preclude but rather demand progressive development. Calvin's theory of the Christian religion in principle was complete at the very beginning of his reformatory career. And the first edition of his *Institutes* contains Calvinism in embryo. But in subsequent editions, by expansion, assimilation and adjustment, the seed developed normally and reached its efflorescence in the final classical edition of 1559.

Thus it is doubtless true that Calvin's doctrine of predestination is found in the very first edition of the *Institutes*, and that in the last edition it is not changed materially. And yet while at first the doctrine of predestination is stated coordinately with other great doctrines, in 1539, in the second edition of the *Institutes*, this doctrine is not only set forth more fully, and defended more elaborately, but, by a change of emphasis, it is elevated into the center of things and becomes the pulsing heart of the system. Henceforth predestination is the constitutive and determinative principle of Calvin's theological speculation. The progressive development from

beginning to end was purely formal not material. It was neither a deepening of the doctrine nor a relaxation of its inherent rigor, but, on the one hand a widening of its implications, and, on the other, its elevation to the very center of a system.

And it is more than a mere coincidence, that, almost simultaneously with his second edition of the Institutes, Calvin published his commentary on Romans. This interesting fact permits us to glimpse at the inner processes of Calvin's development and to trace the spiritual pedigree of that mature doctrine of predestination which thence became the pivot and pillar of his theology.

From Paul's great epistle Calvin derived the impetus to make predestination the regulative principle of theology. Authoritatively and unmistakably Paul seemed to teach it in Romans. It formed the backbone of the greatest epistle of the great Apostle. God had spoken, and before the voice of God the heart and head of man must bow in acquiescent adoration.

What then is Calvin's specific doctrine of predestination as found in the Institutes? If space permitted, the best way to state it would be to use Calvin's own words. But in the Institutes the doctrine, in its fullness, is nowhere stated succinctly. Its treatment runs discursively through four chapters. Therefore, it is impossible to reproduce it here in its analytical fullness, and in its logical clearness and consistency. We must be content with a summary statement. And a fair epitome of Calvin's predestinarianism, as taught in the Institutes, must include the following points:

1. The glory of God is the highest and the ultimate aim and end of all things.
2. For the realization of that end God purposed the creation of the universe, and the whole plan of providence and redemption.
3. This eternal purpose of God includes the fall of man.
4. The fall of Adam involves the whole race of mankind in total depravity and in just condemnation.

5. From the massa perditionis God, by an unalterable decree, has elected a definite number to eternal life, for the manifestation of the glory of his grace.

6. From this massa perditionis God, by an unalterable decree, has elected a definite number to eternal condemnation for the manifestation of the glory of his justice.

7. The ground of this election to life, and the sole reason for this election to condemnation is not the foresight of good or bad character in man, but the good pleasure of God.

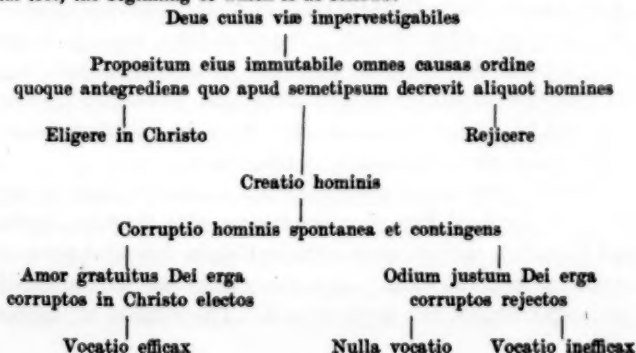
8. For the salvation of those predestinated to eternal life God gave his Son, to make full satisfaction for their sins; and in him the elect have the absolute assurance of their ultimate salvation.

9. Those whom God has predestinated to eternal death he causes to reach their appointed end, sometimes depriving them of the opportunity of hearing the word, sometimes, by the preaching of it, increasing their blindness.

10. The Holy Spirit is present with every man, so long as he lives, restraining evil and exciting good. But his saving power is exercised only in behalf of the elect.

11. All those whom God has chosen to life shall certainly be brought to the knowledge of the truth, to the exercise of faith, and to perseverance in holy living unto the end.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In his "Summa totius Christianismi" Theodore Beza sets forth the Calvinistic dogma of predestination very clearly in the form of a genealogical tree, the beginning of which is as follows:



Such, in bare outline, is the great scheme of Calvinistic predestinarianism. Even its author, while he defended its mysteries and exulted in the glorious comfort of the decree of salvation, was moved to say of the decree of reprobation: "*Decretum quidem horribile fateor.*"

Anyone who has even a slight measure of insight into the metaphysical difficulties of reconciling the fact of sin with the wisdom, the power, and the holiness of God, and of harmonizing the demands of logic and of conscience, will view with the profoundest respect Calvin's attempted solution of the apparent conflict between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Three distinct voices mingle their cries in Calvin's theodicy, the voices of conscience, of logic, and of the heart. Conscience strikes the keynote. Calvin's whole interest in predestination was practical and not speculative. In the Catholic theology the gift of salvation was conveyed to each member through its traditional organs and ordinances. But in Calvin's experience salvation had been mediated not historically and organically by the church, but it had been thrust upon him, as it were, by the absolute unmediated will of God. Gratuitous, irresistible grace had converted him, and, in the interest of the certainty of his salvation, Calvin seeks a scriptural and logical explanation of his experience. Hence his conscience presses his intellect into service. And his intellect, beginning with God, constructs a philosophy of salvation and of history which assures the individual believer of the fixed and unalterable certainty of his election. But with keen anguish Calvin contemplates the negative corollary of predestinated bliss. He does not shrink from discussing and defending reprobation, but he derives no satisfaction from its awful character, as did some ultra Calvinists in later days.

Calvin's doctrine of predestination aroused violent opposition. It involved him in controversies with Pighius, Bolsee and Castellio, against whose attacks Calvin defended predestination with great skill. And the opposition to Calvinistic predestinarianism has never ceased. The conflict of opinion

centers on three controverted points. They are first, whether Calvin is to be classed as a Supralapsarian, or as a Sublapsarian; secondly, whether the Divine Will in the decretal system is ethical or physical and unethical; and thirdly, whether predestinarianism involves the denial of human freedom and responsibility. Let us briefly consider them.

As regards the first controverted question, *i. e.*, whether Calvin's doctrine of predestination is Supralapsarian or Sublapsarian, it must be remembered that these distinct types of predestinarianism did not emerge until after Calvin's death. The terms were not in vogue in his own time, nor was the difference between the two schools a debated question. Amongst predestinarians Calvin is claimed by both schools, with the preponderance of authority leaning towards the view that he taught the milder Sublapsarian predestination. Non-Calvinists usually class Calvin as a rigid Supralapsarian. It will be remembered that the difference between these two schools of predestinarianism hinges on the relation of the decrees to the fall. The unconditional decree of God may include the fall, or may exclude it. Supralapsarianism taught that the decree was antecedent to the fall, and that, therefore, man fell according to the eternal purpose of God. Sublapsarianism maintained that man's apostacy is not referable to the operation of a divine decree, but to man's willful transgression. To which side does Calvin belong?

Judging Calvin by the evidence furnished in his *Institutes* there can be no doubt that he was a rigid Supralapsarian. From other sources certain statements may be quoted which seem to prove that Calvin vacillated between Supralapsarianism and Sublapsarianism. Especially in the *Consensus Genevensis* he does not go beyond Augustinian Sublapsarianism. But it must be remembered that Calvin published the last edition of his *Institutes* in 1559, near the end of his life. It is a fair presumption, therefore, that his mature views are found here rather than in occasional writings that owed their origin to special, defensive and offensive, causes. And in the



Institutes, at least, Calvin's predestinarianism is Supralapsarian. Here his keen mind resolutely brushed aside all Sublapsarian ethical evasions and logical artifices and plunged boldly into the Supralapsarian abyss. He stopped short of the last crucial step, that God is the author of sin. There, even Calvin's logic was confounded. But, barring that illogical concession to his religious feeling, Calvin moves with inexorable logic down the aisles of history, tracing the fall not to a permissive decree, but to the Divine Will and asserting that not foreknowledge but foreordination is antecedent.

It must be confessed of course that, of the two forms of predestinarianism, Supralapsarianism is most revolting to the ethical consciousness of mankind. It does indeed furnish a key to history, with all its anomalies of good and evil, solve all the mysteries of speculation, and eliminate all chance from the universe, but the solution which it offers confuses all moral values. It construes the universe in the terms of sovereignty. Its strength lies in its logic and its weakness in its ethics. And if Sublapsarianism is less severe, its superior mildness is due to its inferior logic. For if sovereignty is the ultimate fact of the universe, if the sovereign will is the ultimate causality, and the glorious manifestation of sovereign justice and grace the ultimate teleological reality, postulates held in common by all Calvinists of both schools, then the data of experience and the facts of history alike demand rigid Supralapsarianism as the only consistent world view. And since sin is a conspicuous factor in this universe, in which God has unalterably foreordained all that comes to pass, it would seem to follow logically, either, that God is the author of sin, or that sin is a delusion of mortal mind and unreal to the divine mind.

The second disputed point in Calvinism is the nature of the Divine Will. It may be stated thus: is the decretal system right because God wills it, or does God will it because it is right? Does right ethicise the might of God, or does his might make right? Evidently this is the crux of predestinarianism.

It has already been stated that, in some sense, all redemptive religions are predestinarian. On the whole, it would seem, predestinarianism commends itself to the religious consciousness of mankind as the most consistent theistic world view. Granted, that God is the author of all things, the efficient cause of their being and the sufficient ground of their existence, then it must follow that there must be unity and stability in the universe. Thus made and controlled the world cannot be a plaything of chance and caprice but must obey law and fixed order. The very idea of monotheism implies that God is the sovereign ruler of the universe who is accomplishing an eternal plan in human history. Let it be borne in mind that this general assertion of the logical satisfactoriness, and perhaps necessity, of a deterministic *Weltanschauung* does not imply the truth of any existing theological, metaphysical or physical system of determinism. It simply signifies that the transcendent God, conceived as intelligent and omnipotent, is immanent in the world process; and that the unfolding processes of nature and history are the realization of the divine idea.

Now Calvin has given us a detailed program of this divine plan and of the means which God uses for its accomplishment. But who or what is Calvin's God? Is he a good, a reasonable being, whose actions are determined not by caprice, but by his character of absolute goodness and love? Is he the God whom Jesus taught us to know and to love, the Father of little children who can claim His love and render in return their filial service?

There can be no doubt that personally Calvin possessed the profoundest and sincerest conception of the absolute moral perfection of God. His soul thrilled and his whole being throbbled with a pure passionate love of the infinite and awful beauty of his maker. And it was this sublime thought of the perfect majesty of God that controlled and shaped his wonderful life. Modern Calvinistic writers contend that Calvin placed this perfect God, who ruled in his heart, in the center of his system; that he subordinated the doctrine of the divine

sovereignty to an ethical conception of God. And that, consequently, the decrees were not the work of absolute power, but rather the inevitable expression of absolute goodness; that God exercised His sovereignty not with the caprice of a tyrant but in full accordance with His ethical character.

If this is Calvin's starting point few men will find fault with him. There can be no objection to divine sovereignty if the vitalizing thought is that the one absolute sovereign of the universe is the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose will ultimately shall be regnant and triumphant on earth and in heaven. Then predestination according to His good pleasure means predestination according to His pleasure in the good. It is ethical and comprehensible.

But that is evidently not the view of God underlying the predestinarianism of the Institutes.<sup>2</sup> "The will of God," Calvin said, "is the highest rule of justice." Not His perfect nature but His sovereign will is the ground of His actions. Hence, when objection is made to Calvin's doctrine of predestination on the ground that it would be unjust for God to punish creatures for the commission of sins which they were by himself foreordained to commit, Calvin replied, "how could any injustice be committed by him who is the judge of the world?" That means His will is the supreme law, and right and wrong are volitional distinctions of the omnipotent being. The whole decretal system of the Institutes presupposes precisely such a monarchical God. He extends, or withholds mercy as He pleases, for the glory of His sovereign power. According to the unsearchable counsel of His own will He elects some to eternal life and ordains others to dishonor and wrath. It is true that the Institutes does ascribe ethical qualities to God. It speaks freely and frequently of His holiness, justice and mercy. But the qualities denoted by these terms do not constitute the very essence of God. They are peripheral, while the will is central. The deepest thing in God, the *causa immanens*, is pure abstract will that is

<sup>2</sup> See "Institutes," Bk. III., Chapter 23: 11.

determined by nothing whatever but absolute caprice. Theoretically Calvin maintained that the divine will is conditioned by the divine nature, and that the most essential attributes of God are justice and grace. But practically His nature does not condition His will; on the contrary, His will capriciously rules his character. God's most necessary function is sovereignty, not justice nor grace. The sovereign is described as exercising His sovereignty justly and graciously under the double decree; justly predestinating some to eternal reprobation and graciously predestinating others to eternal salvation. This is expressed tersely and clearly in the Institutes, in the second paragraph of the 23 chapter. Calvin says, "Yet we espouse not the notion of the Romish theologians concerning the absolute and arbitrary power of God, which, on account of its profaneness, deserves our detestation. We represent not God as lawless, who is a law unto himself." And in the same paragraph Calvin completely neutralizes this quasi-ethical conception of God's sovereignty by asserting, "it is impious to suppose that there is something antecedent to the will of God, on which it depends. The will of God is the highest rule of justice; so that what He wills must be considered just, for this very reason, because He wills it."

Calvin himself calls this predestinarian scheme "just and irreprehensible, but incomprehensible." To our moral sense it seems perfectly comprehensible, but also absolutely reprehensible and unjust. If the God who is the supreme ruler of the universe is exalted above all ethical distinctions because He is God, then might makes right. Like an oriental tyrant He can do what He pleases. He is the absolute ruler of a kingdom where His will is law. Given such a God and the decretal system is comprehensible as the caprice of a tyrant. But according to human ethical standards His decrees are unjust and reprehensible.

And when non-Calvinists criticise as unjust and reprehensible the condemnation of infants on account of imputed sin, and the reprobation of adults because of the conveyed corruption

of a remote ancestor they are told that such reasoning is purely subjective and derives all its force from our human limitations. It assumes, they say, that we are competent to sit in judgment on God's government of the universe, that we can judge the end which He has in view, and also the justice and wisdom of the means adopted for its accomplishment. And this, they contend, is clearly a preposterous assumption. What is man that he should contend with God, or presume that his interests rather than God's glory should be made the final end? We are shut up to facts, the facts of providence, of the Bible, and of experience. We have no right to say that the goodness of God forbids the permission of sin and the punishment of sinful creatures. We have no right to say that His justice requires that all rational creatures should be treated alike. But, we reply, granting, that God is infinitely superior to man in character and being, yet, His morality cannot differ in kind from our morality. Justice cannot be blind and grace dare not be partial. Not will and force, but reason and freedom must be the terms in which the relations of an ethical God to His universe are expressed. The ethical instinct of mankind recoils from the partialistic justice of Calvin's predestinarianism as subversive of divine goodness and righteousness. And if this divinest instinct of mankind is not trustworthy then there remains no standard of ethical judgment on earth.

The third controverted point of Calvinistic predestinarianism is its alleged denial of human freedom and, consequently, responsibility. Belief in human freedom is as essential to our moral life as, within its own sphere, is the belief in the general uniformity of nature. It will be granted by all rational beings that the denial of freedom must logically result in denying all proper responsibility, all merit and demerit. If our life is simply the resultant of antecedent forces, unalterably the effect of an eternal cause, then the sin of the sinner and the sanctification of the saint must alike be regarded as necessary. Under a reign of law, that is destructive of

freedom, the universe would be a parallelogram of forces but not the arena of free and responsible action.

Calvinism has been generally accused of reducing man to a mere automaton, the puppet in the hands of absolute will; but it has always strenuously denied the impeachment, and has resorted to marvelous dialectical hair-splitting in order to refute it. The sense of responsibility inherent in man has given predestinarianism the utmost embarrassment. And a formal and explicit denial of human freedom would be so great an affront to the moral consciousness of mankind that one cannot expect it even from that system of thought which is based upon the absolute and unconditional sovereignty of the Divine Will, and which, by every implication of logic, reduces man to helpless clay in the hands of an omnipotent potter. Calvinistic predestinarianism has from the beginning been in the hapless plight of being compelled, by the ineradicable sense of human freedom and responsibility, to deny with specious logic what its fundamental principles assert with bold assurance. Sometimes predestinarians have rested their case on the contention that foreknowledge antecedes and conditions foreordination. The double predestination, they have maintained, was determined by the divine prescience, according to which God foresaw the moral disposition of men. But Calvin, with characteristic logic, said, "Predestination is involved in many cavils, especially by those who make foreknowledge the cause of it. We maintain, that both belong to God, but it is preposterous to represent one as dependent on the other." Other Calvinists with much mental acumen have constructed a theory of the will which will square with the facts of the decretal system. And such is the ambiguity of language and the confusion of thought on this difficult matter, that their philosophical defense is not without plausibility. It amounts briefly to this, that liberty and ability are not identical and must not be confused, and that certainty is perfectly consistent with liberty. They maintain that a free act may be inevitably certain as to its occurrence, and

yet perfectly free as to its performance. That is to say, the will is determined by an eternal decree, but the act is free, because it is not the result of external force, but the fruit of internal character. Now common sense would seem to require, that, in order to render man justly responsible for his character, which determines his will, it must be self acquired. But predestinarian philosophy announces with ex-cathedra assurance that this is confounding things which are distinct. God by His eternal decree determines the character of each individual. Man has no inherent ability to change from depravity to holiness, any more than he can thrust himself from the pinnacles of redemption into the abyss of reprobation; yet he is free and responsible. Man falls, says Calvin, God's providence so ordains it; yet he falls by his own guilt.

Surely, ethical reason stands abashed before such unmoral logic, and agrees humbly with Calvin, "that there is a learned ignorance of things which it is neither permitted nor lawful to know, and avidity of knowledge is a species of madness." If this is divine logic, then man must either immolate reason upon the shrine of blind and abject faith, or, by the canons of human logic and morality, he must reject the decretum horrible as violating the essential goodness of God.

Whence did Calvin derive his doctrine of predestination? Mention has already been made of certain dogmatic postulates of predestination which were shared by all the reformers. In a sense, the doctrines grew inevitably out of the biblical, anthropological and soteriological convictions of Calvin. At the same time it has a very definite literary pedigree. It was derived from Calvin's patristic and scriptural studies; specifically from St. Augustine and from St. Paul.

In the history of human thought and achievement Calvinism stands for much more than predestinarianism. The whole modern world owes a vast spiritual, religious and social debt to Calvin. And yet, by the irony of history, his own most original contribution to religious thought and to the life of the world is undervalued by many, who esteem most highly his



theology, which is the most vulnerable and the least original part of Calvin's labors.

Historically Calvinistic predestinarianism reaches back to Augustine. The Saint of Hippo is Calvin's spiritual Father, and Calvin is his lineal heir. Augustinian and Calvinistic predestination are by no means identical. But without the former, the latter is historically inexplicable; and without the latter, the former is logically inchoate. Space forbids a detailed discussion of their mutual relation and agreement. The points of difference between them are chiefly two. Augustine developed the doctrine of predestination controversially, in a fierce theological conflict with Pelagius; while Calvin was led to its adoption logically, by the calm and critical processes of study and reflection. Hence, while in matter Augustine's predestinarianism is milder than Calvin's, sublapsarian instead of supralapsarian, yet, in his manner, Augustine often excels Calvin in harshness of statement and in the complacent breadth with which he depicts the fate of the reprobate. The second difference between the two arises from the fact that in Augustine the doctrine of predestination lies imbedded in a sacramental and sacerdotal conception of the church. According to it God made the decree, but the church manipulates it, and administers the divine will through priestly operations. The church and its sacrosanct ordinances stand between guilty mankind and the sovereign God. Theologically Augustine conceived of salvation as absolutely and eternally decreed by the will of God; but ecclesiastically he described it as conditionally bestowed through the sacraments of the church. Either principle applied rigorously neutralizes the other. Calvin, while accepting Augustine's predestinarianism, swept aside his priestly conception of the church. In Calvinism no sacerdotal order, no sacrosanct ordinances intervene between God and man. Calvin asserted the twin principles of religious individualism and of the spiritual catholicity of the church; in the invisible church man stood face to face with God. Thus, Augustine, the bishop of Hippo, excludes from heaven

all unbaptized children dying in infancy, while Calvin, expressly teaches the salvation of all elect infants, whether baptized or not.

But Calvin claimed more than patristic authority for his central doctrine. He derived it from the Bible, and especially from the teaching of St. Paul, as interpreted by him. Calvin was the ablest exegete of the reformation, and his commentaries, written with rare spiritual insight into scriptural truth, will never become obsolete. But he accepted the mechanical theory of inspiration and that vitiated his interpretation of scripture. To Calvin the Bible was the revelation of the sovereign will of God, dictated by the Holy Spirit to the writers, whom he calls, "Sure and authentic amanuenses." To him it was not the disclosure, by inspired men, of the heart and character of the Father, but the publication of the will and law of the Sovereign of the universe, by means of an inspired book. Hence, of course, the Bible was equally inspired, and equally valuable for instruction, in all its parts. The proof text method of dogmatics is the complement of the mechanical theory of inspiration. And if we approach the Bible in that spirit we can prove anything, according to our dominant dogmatic prepossession.

It is not surprising therefore that Calvin found the Old Testament full of predestinarian proof text.<sup>3</sup> For the Old Testament is imbued with the thought of the all-pervasive presence of the eternal creative will, and everything, the evil as well as the good, is brought directly under the control of God. With naïve, anthropomorphic, unmediated directness the divine sovereignty is conceived to be so absolute that it may without question harden the heart of the sinner, destine a man to perdition, or choose and exalt whom it will to honor and everlasting felicity. If the expressions of an immature moral development in the consciousness of Israel are on a par

<sup>3</sup> Vide Ex. 7: 3; I. Kings 22-22; Jer. 13: 13-14; Isaiah 45: 7; 6: 9-10; Amos 3: 6.

with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, then predestinarianism rests secure on abundant scriptural testimonies; then Calvin's doctrine of predestination is not only strictly logical but also soundly scriptural. And the only difference between the Old Testament and the Institutes is, that what in the former is simply oracularly declared, in the latter is theoretically and systematically explained.

And in this latter respect Paul was a forerunner of Calvin. His Hebrew consciousness brought all history, including evil as well as good, completely under the sway of the divine sovereignty. But his Hellenic mind must needs find a reason for the faith that was in him. As a Jew he believed in the sovereign providence of God; as a Greek he explained it by his philosophy of history.

This Pauline theodicy receives its largest expression in his great letter to the Romans. And since this epistle is the arsenal and the armory of Calvinistic predestinarianism it behooves us to inquire: what is Pauline predestination?

The disturbing element in Paul's thoroughly Hebrew conviction of God's absolute guidance of history was the paradox of sin. Paul squarely faces the paradox and in Romans he solves it, much like Calvin, by asserting that sin is not only a fact of human experience, but also, that, as a part of the whole providential history of the human race, it was intended to be so by the irresistible decree of God. That this is the plain exegetical sense of Romans 9: 6-29 cannot be denied. Its strict literal interpretation buttresses extreme supralapsarianism. But the same method of exegesis applied to Romans 11: 32-36 yields a Pauline doctrine of universalism. There he teaches, not that some will be saved, but that under the divine sovereignty of the eternal love all shall be saved. In this passage of his moral philosophy of human history Paul seems to lift his vision to the last daring height of speculation. He sees the ultimate reason why "God has shut up all under disobedience," viz., "that he might have mercy upon all."

Therefore, if predestinarianism has Pauline proof-texts, so has universalism.<sup>4</sup>

But no exegesis does justice to Paul that detaches a verse, or a chapter from the body of his teaching, and in the interests of a dogmatic presupposition applies a passage referring to a historical situation, to a metaphysical argument. In Romans 9 Paul affirms the unconditional sovereignty of God; in Chapter 10 he asserts human responsibility and in the 11th Chapter he suggests the future ultimate explanation of the paradox of sin. Calvinistic predestinarianism, then, cannot claim the authority of the great Apostle for its scheme of salvation. Pauline predestination is temporal particularism in order to an ultimate (conditional or unconditional?) universalism of grace.

But, whatever is Pauline predestination, in conclusion we say with Calvin himself, "Now, let the supreme Master and Judge decide the whole matter." Is there any warrant for Calvinistic predestinarianism in the mind of the Master? My conviction is that Calvin's decretal system of theology and Jesus' conception of God are so disparate, that, if the one is true, the other must be false.

Jesus, too, teaches the sovereignty of God. But in the teaching of Jesus sovereignty is the kingship exercised by the Father in heaven over the intelligent and responsible creatures of his hand, not the pre-mundane decretal caprice of absolute power; exercised, moreover, in full accordance with His fatherliness, for their salvation, and not for the manifestation of His abstract glory.

And Jesus believes in sin. We find in his teaching no abstract definition of sin, and no speculative theory of its origin. He simply recognizes the fact of sin. The malady was universal and its seat was in the heart of man, *i. e.*, in the sphere of human motive and will. Ideally, all men were the children of the Father, and while actually sin had

<sup>4</sup> Vide John 12: 32; I. Cor. 15: 22; I. Cor. 15: 28; Ephes. 1: 10; Col. 1: 20; Phil. 2: 10-11; I. Tim. 4: 10; Titus 2: 11.

estranged men from God, yet they were loved and missed in the Father's house. Mankind was not a *massa perditionis*; but, in all their unfilial disobedience, men were still the sons of God, capable of returning to their Father.

And Jesus also offers salvation. As the malady of sin is universal so the remedy for sin which Jesus offers is likewise universal. Salvation is not grounded in a pre-temporal election of the absolute sovereign, but in the eternal love of the Father. And man is not its passive recipient, but he must seek it earnestly, and receive it with humble gratitude.

And Jesus teaches that there may ultimately be an irremediable depravity in man. But, far from being the result of an unalterable divine decree, it is caused, in direct opposition to the will of God, by a man's persistent and malignant hatred of goodness.

Thus contrasted Calvinistic predestinarianism and Christ's conception of God are absolutely incongruous, and one must either renounce Calvinism, or abandon Christ's teaching, as a valid conception of the ultimate reality. There are other defective systems of theology which do not make Christ's God-consciousness consistently regulative and normative. Yes, one may go further, and declare, that the God-consciousness of Jesus Christ has been used fully in no system of speculative theology. But among all defective system Calvinism is facile princeps. To Melancthon Calvinism appeared as a revival of Stoicism. And to the christological consciousness of our own day Calvinistic predestinarianism is structurally and metaphysically more nearly akin to some primitive law religion than to christianity. Its conception of the divine government of the universe is derived from a court of justice, oriental justice at that, and not from the family relation. From that primitive notion of the deity as a judge, or sovereign, enforcing his arbitrary decrees, we must rise to the christian thought of a loving Father bent on the education and salvation of the human race.

And to this higher christological standpoint the moral and

religious consciousness of our age is steadily advancing. The day will come when a new Calvin shall arise in the theological world, a man in whom the elements of head, heart and will are mixed as nobly as they were in the great reformer of the Sixteenth Century. But, reversing the order of Calvin, he will interpret Augustine and St. Paul in the light of Christ's Message of the Eternal. He will satisfy our christian consciousness with a theology whose regulative principle lies in these words of Jesus: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

ALLENTOWN, PA.

#### IV.

### THE DOCTRINE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER IN CALVIN'S SYSTEM OF THOUGHT.

A STUDY OF THE SUBJECT IN THE LIGHT OF TO-DAY.

BY THE REV. A. S. WEBER, D.D.

John Morley in beginning his "Life of Gladstone" calls the undertaking a stroke of temerity. A similar characterization might perhaps with not inconsiderable truthfulness be applied to an attempt to discuss, within the limits editorially prescribed for this article, Calvin's doctrinal theory of the Lord's Supper. The difficulties in the present instance arise, however, less from the necessity of bringing a great mass of material on the subject within the scope of a reasonable brevity, than from the fact that the subject, large as it is in itself, cannot be separated from the rest of Calvin's system of doctrine and given independent consideration.

From a closely articulated system of thought, such as Calvin's is known to be, no important doctrine can be taken out of its relations to other doctrines without rendering it largely unintelligible. It may seem somewhat paradoxical, but it is none the less true, to say that no doctrine can be adequately set forth or fully understood, until all the other doctrines have been stated and apprehended. The very word "system" implies that the doctrinal parts making up its content, hang together in a mutually inter-dependent relationship that is vitally significant and important, and that a knowledge of the whole conditions that of its several parts.

In the space here available, it is plainly impossible to enter upon the study of the subject, even in bare outline, in the comprehensive manner thus seen to be required for its fully satis-



factory elucidation. The best way remaining open for our approach to the subject must therefore be taken. We must inquire, in a preliminary way, what is the general philosophical and theological basis upon which Calvin's system of doctrine rests. What are the assumed presuppositions underlying his conceptions as to the nature of man and his needs, as to Christ and Christianity in their adaptation to those needs, as to the Church and its ordinances, in logical consistency with which are formulated the theories of the Sacraments in general and that of the Lord's Supper in particular. Such an inquiry will show that the essential features of these general philosophical and theological assumptions were not new to the age of the Reformation. They were not the intellectual product of the sixteenth century. Calvin and his Protestant co-laborers, whilst insisting upon slight and not unimportant changes of detail here and there in doctrinal statement, retained the fundamental "scheme" which the Church of Rome had handed down to them, and which, so far as its essentials are concerned, can be traced back not only to Augustine and earlier fathers, but to Paul's exposition of the Christian religion as found in his contributions to the New Testament Scriptures.

The correctness of this view of the attitude of the Reformers toward the earlier doctrines of the Church, may be verified and confirmed by instancing several particulars. The traditional "orthodoxy" of historic Christianity, Roman and Protestant alike, from the days of Paul on to the middle of the last century, has been based on several outstanding and coördinated assumptions. (1) The fallen and corrupt nature of man. (2) The necessity of a regeneration that can be wrought only by Divine intervention and super-human power. (3) A view of Christ's person and office answerable to man's need of a new birth. (4) A conception of the Church and the Sacraments as divinely ordained to mediate Christ's saving power to the believing members of our lost and ruined race. That in their *essence*, these age-old conceptions of the truth

were accepted, without qualification in their unaltered form, is fully established by a comparison between the teachings on these points of the Heidelberg Catechism, the Westminster Confession, and the Thirty Nine Articles, on the one hand, and of the Decrees of the Council of Trent, the statements of Augustine, Athanasius, and Irenæus, and the writings of the Apostle Paul, on the other hand. All of them are essentially at one on the broad general assumptions under notice. Those who in the sixteenth century withdrew from the Roman communion, it is evident, therefore, were constrained to do so on grounds other than those covered by those assumptions.

So far as men in our day have broken with one or more or all of these traditional conceptions of religious truth, causes other than those residing in the principles of Protestantism must be sought to account for their changed attitude toward those conceptions. Men in both the Roman and Protestant fellowship have broken with at least some of them, and have done so for substantially the same reasons. These reasons may be summarized under two heads. (1) The accredited achievements of modern science. (2) The results attained by the critical study of Jesus' teachings as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. So largely determinative of its trend are these factors of present-day thought, and so directly have they to do with the transformation of religious doctrines, that we may properly pause for a moment in passing to give them the attention they deserve.

As everybody, acquainted with the intellectual life of our age, knows, the scientific theory of Evolution during the last half century has been winning a steadily increasing number of thinking Christians to a conviction of the validity of its principal claims. Multitudes of Christians, in pulpits and pews the world over, accept the statement recently made by a distinguished university president, that "the chief and essential contention of Darwin is absolutely beyond question from those competent to form an opinion."<sup>1</sup> This compels not

<sup>1</sup> David Starr Jordan, in *The Independent*, February 11, 1909, p. 323.

simply a re-statement or modification, but a surrender of the ancient theory of the "fall of man," together with those doctrines immediately connected with or related to that theory. Similarly, the historico-critical investigation of the New Testament Scriptures has been succeeding in multiplying the number of its convinced followers. Men, in whose character sound learning and true Christian devotion are combined, and whom it is a libel to charge with being disloyal to the truth and unfaithful to Christ, are giving the most earnest and painstaking attention to this investigation, and frankly accepting the results it is establishing. Among these results, there are some in the light of which open-minded searchers after the truth are forced to give up traditional formulas, particularly such as are loaded with metaphysical distinctions or veiled in mysterious obscurity, and to replace them by those simpler and understandable conceptions of Christian truth in support of which the sayings of Jesus himself, rather than those of any of his earlier or later interpreters, can be confidently quoted from the records of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

This confidence in the simpler sayings of Jesus, rather than in the more complex and abstract statements of others, does not rest on an arbitrary preference merely of what is simple and easily understood. It is prompted and sustained by the discoveries which critical scholarship has made in the pursuit of its comparative study of the New Testament documents. Among those discoveries, one has established the existence of marked—and some would add, irreconcilable—differences in fundamentally important conceptions of religion, between the historic records of the Synoptists on the one side and the interpretative and apologetic writings of Paul and John, for instance, on the other side. Some of these differences have been recently pointed out, by a learned professor in one of the leading "orthodox" theological seminaries of our country, in a notable contribution to the *American Journal of Theology*.<sup>2</sup> So pertinent to the present discussion are certain of

<sup>2</sup> See the first article by Professor McGiffert, in January, 1909, issue.

its contentions, that in venturing to transfer them for the purpose of illustrating a point for which they were not originally designed, one feels certain they lose nothing of their persuasiveness and force.

The author of the paper referred to holds that there is "a great and consistent body of teaching," in the writings of Paul and of John, which "is wanting altogether in the Synoptic Gospels." That which makes such a statement the more significant is the fact that to that "body of teaching," which cannot be traced back to Jesus and in support of which no sayings of the Master can be adduced, "is due the larger and perhaps controlling part of the Christianity of all the centuries." This does not deny that, side by side with its dominant elements, there run through Christianity influences of a different and higher order which must be ascribed to Jesus. It only affirms that these influences have not yet had their day, and suggests the problem of deciding whether prior authority does or does not belong to the Synoptists. No such problem arises, Dr. McGiffert reminds us, from a comparative study of Paul and John. Between them, it is perfectly clear, the connection and agreement are very close. "Many of the essential features of Paul's system," it is asserted, "re-appear in the Gospel according to John: the necessity of regeneration changing a man from a fleshly to a spiritual being, union with Christ, the deity of Christ, the sacramental view of baptism and the Lord's Supper,—all these are found in the teaching of the Johannine Christ. But all the more striking by contrast is the lack of all these elements in the teaching of the Jesus of the Synoptists. In the latter nothing is said of the essentially fleshly and evil nature of man, nothing of a consequent need of regeneration, nothing of mystical union with Christ, nothing of the deity of Christ, and not a trace of sacramentalism appears in connection with its references to baptism and the Lord's Supper."

In a subsequent paragraph of the article from which we are quoting the author returns to give added emphasis to these

discovered differences. "In Jesus' teaching," he there says, "there is no hint of the radical badness and utter helplessness of human nature, of which Paul made so much, and no hint of a consequent necessity of the transformation of man's nature by supernatural agency. It is not simply that Paul threw the matter into theological or philosophical form, but that his view of man and his need was totally at variance with Christ's. And if this is true of the fundamental elements of Paul's system, it is true also of their corollaries—the doctrine of salvation, of the person and work of Christ, of the Church and the sacraments. All these had their origin ultimately in the experience of Paul, and not in the teaching of Jesus."

Conclusions such as these in the realm of criticism, even more so than the results of evolution in the realm of science, carry into the theological world, not merely suggestions that may be momentarily perplexing and disconcerting, but forces that must be permanently effective and revolutionizing. "The new philosophy, the new criticism, the new science," an ultra-conservative theologian said the other day, "are compelling a re-statement of the Christian faith."<sup>3</sup> It can hardly be allowed, however, that his word 're-statement' meets the requirements of the situation. No revision, however drastic, could suffice to make traditional systems of theology and ancient confessional standards, acceptable to the modern mind. What is needed in the circumstances of to-day, is a reconstruction of doctrinal and confessional theology in its entirety, and upon foundations that are at once true to Jesus' conceptions of God and man, and in harmony with the sanctions of an enlightened Christian conscience.

When we turn, now—after these somewhat lengthy but not unimportant parenthetical observations on the results of science and criticism in their relations to Christian doctrine in general—to give attention in the light of those results to Calvin's system in particular, we may, even in advance, anticipate finding certain normative doctrines of his so thoroughly at

<sup>3</sup> The Rev. W. Robertson Nicoll, D.D., editor of *The British Weekly*.

variance with current conceptions of the truth, as to preclude the possibility of our acquiescing in them. This will be seen at once when we begin our examination, as we naturally should, by an inquiry as to his fundamental ideas concerning God and man. These were far more the metaphysical notions of Deity and of the corrupt and hopelessly depraved nature of man, as taught by Paul, than the conceptions of Jesus, so vividly realized and impressively taught by him, of God as Father, and of man as God's imperfect, upward-struggling child. One reading Calvin's "Institutes" can hardly fail to realize that his mind was steeped, not so much in the teachings of the early Gospels, as in the mysticism and philosophy of Paul and of John. The great bulk of the scriptural citations with which he undertakes to fortify his views are taken, not from the Synoptists, but from other books of the New Testament. In this regard Calvin resembles the distinguished British theologian whose Chicago lectures, afterwards published under the title of "Studies in Theology," failed to give anything but the most meager attention to the words of Jesus. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that to Calvin, as to Paul, God should be so largely an arbitrary Sovereign, "electing some members of the race that has been ruined by Adam's 'fall' to the hope of life, and adjudging others to eternal death."<sup>4</sup> It is even less surprising that to him, man should be by heredity and practice a lost and ruined being doomed to death. "All men are totally ruined," he affirms, "not only by corrupt habits but by depravity of nature. They are overwhelmed with an inevitable calamity from which they can never emerge unless extricated by Divine inter-position. So completely is the mind of man alienated from the righteousness of God, that it conceives desires and undertakes everything that is impious, perverse, base and impure; so thoroughly is the heart of man infected by the poison of sin that it cannot produce anything but what is corrupt."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Cf. "The Institutes," Book 3, Chap. 21, Sec. 5.

<sup>5</sup> "Institutes," Book 3, Chap. 3.

Now, as compared to such Calvinistic views, it may be confidently affirmed, the nobler vision of God in his fatherly relationship and disposition toward man and the changed conception of man, prevailing to-day as the result of spiritual growth under scientific and critical methods of acquiring a knowledge of the truth, afford an immeasurably stronger and more uplifting appeal. They inspire a love for and trust in the Father who pities our frailties and assures us of forgiveness, who woos us into communion with himself by his Spirit and grace, and who guides and supports our feeble and faltering efforts toward the achievement of spiritual ideals in life and character. They dispel a craven religious temper and encourage at once a bolder, more trustful, and hopeful attitude of mind and heart. They change the quality of fear in religion from mere dread of punishment and pain in the world to come, to the nobler moral dread of degradation and corruption of soul and character in the present world. They help men to realize that a "lost soul" does not mean a soul that is to be endlessly tortured hereafter in physical perdition, but a soul that has missed its true life, is shivelled, maimed and polluted, now. The fear of such an issue is a reasonable and worthy element in religion, and reflects the mind that was in Christ.

Passing on in our examination of Calvin's views, from those of God and man, to those which involve his conception of the "redemptive scheme," we find him construing the person and work of Christ, with logical nicety and precision, according to the requirements of his earlier pre-suppositions. In the mystery of the incarnate person of the Son of God, he, as the second Adam, "recapitulates" the race and provides, through its union with him, for man's new start toward salvation. "Through union with and participation in Christ," he says, "man is made a partaker of the resurrection, he is raised to newness of life, and the Divine image which through sin had been defaced and almost obliterated, is restored within him. This is the regeneration which God has provided for man in



his only-begotten Son."<sup>6</sup> To become available, this provision made in Christ requires not alone a faithful obedience to the commandments of God and such a hearty trust in Christ as he has asked us to repose in him; there are needed, in addition, the Church, an ordained ministry, and the sacraments, for its transmission to and the nourishment of the individual believer. "Owing to our ignorance and slothfulness, and, I may add, the vanity of our minds"; Calvin asserts, "external aids are appointed of God in order that through faith the Gospel of Christ may become ours. First among these external aids appointed of God to be instrumental to our salvation is the Holy Church. The Church is the mother of all that have God for their Father. There is no other way of entrance into life except to be conceived by her, born of her, nourished at her breast, and continually preserved under her care and government. Chosen and separated from the world by Christ, the Church is his spouse, his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. Union with Christ being conditioned by union with his Church, it follows that the latter is essential to salvation. It follows, moreover, that a departure from the Church is a renunciation of God and of Christ, a more atrocious crime and sacrilegious perfidy than which cannot be imagined, because it involves the violation of the conjugal relation which the only-begotten Son of God has condescended to form with us—a violation which makes those guilty of it deserving to be crushed with the most powerful thunders of his wrath."<sup>7</sup>

There is no need of tarrying at this point to indicate by quotations, the conception of the ministry which corresponds to this idea of the Church. It will be sufficient to say that to Calvin's mind, the functions of the holy office are the logical outcome of the notion, for which there is not a suggestion of support to be found in any authentic word of Jesus, that the Church is not a fabric reared by men, but a mystically ap-

<sup>6</sup> "Institutes," Book 3, Chaps. 13 and 14.

<sup>7</sup> "Institutes," Book 4, Chap. 1.

pointed channel of salvation, an indispensable element in the relation between the soul of man and his Creator. This superhumanly "high" conception of the Church has not yet entirely lost its hold in certain regions even of Protestantism. Happily, however, its influence in that branch of the Church with which most of the readers of *THE REFORMED CHURCH REVIEW* are identified, has been a dwindling power during the last few decades. Vague, inherited feelings and customs will, no doubt for some time longer, lend some sort of support to the supposition that membership in the Church involves something incommensurably more than union with other Christian associations, that it makes one an inward partaker of ineffable and mysterious graces to which, apart from the Church, there is no access; but conscious Christianity, in its thought of communion and fellowship with God, no longer reckons with Church mediation any more than it does with priestly mediation.

A theological reactionary of the day, a few weeks since in writing upon the subject of "Criticising the Church," said it was astonishing to see how many "powerful minds had taken and were continuing to take" an attitude of this kind toward the Church. He cites with evident regret and strong disapprobation Professor Harnack's counsel that "he who has a denomination should be as though he had it not. That is, the Church's end is not in itself, and one should sit loose to it except as an instrument for achieving ends apart from which it is of no value." This view of the Church is of course wholly foreign to the Calvinistic conception, but it is only another way of saying what the opponents of the "high-church" party affirmed fifty or sixty years ago during the Anglican controversies abroad and the corresponding controversies in our own country. To those opponents the Church, whilst founded and maintained in history by a directing Providence, was nevertheless a human corporation devised to strengthen men in their struggle after goodness and holiness by the association and mutual help of fellow-believers. It was

a corporation of Christians, voluntarily associated with a view of becoming more effective in their efforts to accomplish certain definite purposes: The commemoration of Gospel events was to minister to their own development and strength in the spiritual life, but at the same time send them forth in the spirit of their Master to minister unto others. The linking of Gospel truth to well-ordered living was to end, not with themselves, but result in carrying blessing to fellowmen. Through them the diffusion of a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, was to be brought about, and God's Kingdom extended into every relation and circumstance of life, no less than into every nation, kindred and tribe of the earth. In a scientific age like ours, when the Church, conceived of as "constitutionally sacramental" often repels rather than attracts, may it not be the finger of Providence that is wisely pointing us to the importance of returning through such speculative mysteries as those that have too long enveloped men's conceptions of the Church, back to the simplicity that is in Jesus and his "Gospel of the Kingdom"?

The transition from the foregoing considerations of certain general aspects of Calvin's system of thought, to the notice of the sacramental theories which are an essential and constituent part of that system, as already intimated, can now be made with a sense of at least a partial preparedness for properly appraising their soundness. To the extent to which we have succeeded in showing that the "system" and its ruling ideas are not immune from the possibility of serious objection, to that extent, it must be manifest, such a quarry of thought cannot be expected to furnish the stones needed for an enduring and satisfying structure embodying the nature and meaning of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Against Calvin's carefully guarded statements concerning the initial Sacrament, it may not be necessary for a modern mind to register special protest. Instead of regarding it as the divinely ordained method by which God conveys his grace of regeneration, he declares himself "by no means able to admit that baptism is

essential to salvation. That is an ill-stated notion, mischievous in its consequences and an insult to God."<sup>8</sup> As a sign, he insists, it is declarative, not communicative, of the fact that "it is the Lord who forgives and cleanses us, who obliterates the remembrance of our sins, who makes us partakers of his death, who weakens the power of our corrupt propensities, and who makes us one with himself. By baptism believers are certified of God's blessings, but the blessings are not bound or inclosed in the Sacrament which has not the power of imparting them to us. It is only a sign by which the Lord testifies that he is determined to give us all these things."<sup>9</sup> His language on these points, in the passages cited, it will be observed, does not contain even the remotest suggestion of the theory that the vital germ of immortality is communicated to the believer and his child in and through this sacramental act. In fact, it explicitly pronounces against it. And if the Reformed ecclesiastics had been content with Calvin's statements of the doctrine, and refrained from importing into our theology and into the "Office for Baptism" the so-called baptismal-regeneration theories of the Romanists or of the high-church party in the Anglican communion in which Hurrell Froude and John Henry Newman, Keble and Pusey, figured so conspicuously, how much unnecessary and harmful controversy in our branch of the Church would have been avoided.

The language in which Calvin's views of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper are set forth, is far less of an approximation, however, to the present-day conceptions of the ordinance, than is that just cited with reference to baptism. The intellectual storm-center of his age was the nature and significance of this particular doctrine, and those reading what he has written on the subject are made to feel that he found it peculiarly difficult to formulate the conclusions to which his inquiries had brought him. Thoroughly persuaded that ubiquity cannot be ascribed to Christ's glorified humanity, that his body is

<sup>8</sup> "Institutes," Book 4, Chap. 15, p. 491.

<sup>9</sup> "Institutes," Book 4, Chap. 14, p. 486.

locally present in heaven only and in no conceivable sense included (as Romanists in one form and Lutherans in another, taught that it was), in the consecrated elements of bread and wine, and that it can be apprehended and received by faith only and not at all by communicants' hands and mouths—thoroughly persuaded concerning all this, he nevertheless found himself unable to agree with the theologian, who according to the late A. V. G. Allen was four centuries ahead of his contemporaries, that the Lord's Supper was a commemorative act only. "Whilst there are some who define, in a word, that to eat the flesh of Christ and to drink his blood, is no other than to believe in Christ," he writes, "I conceive that in that remarkable discourse in which Christ recommends us to feed upon his body, he intended to instruct us that we are quickened by a real participation of him which he designates eating and drinking,—instruction which implies the actual transfusion of Christ's life into us through the sacrament he has appointed. At the same time we confess that there is no other eating than by faith, as it is impossible to imagine any other. But the difference between me and those whose opinion I now oppose is this: They consider eating to be the same thing as believing, while I say that in believing we eat the flesh of Christ, and that this eating is the fruit and effect of faith."<sup>10</sup> Significantly he adds: "The difference is small in words"—and it must be left to those that have perceptive powers sufficiently keen to do so, to follow him as he continues—"but in the thing itself the difference is considerable."

The specific ends, which to Calvin's mind, the ordinance is designed to subserve, are definitely considered and stated in other sections of the lengthy chapter devoted in the "Institutes" to this subject. "Our souls are fed by the flesh and blood of Christ," he thinks, "just as our corporal life is preserved and sustained by bread and wine. Though it appears incredible for the flesh of Christ from such an immense local

<sup>10</sup> "Institutes," Book 4, Chap. 17, Sec. 5.

distance to reach us, so as to become our food, we should remember how much the secret power of the Holy Spirit transcends all our senses, and what folly it is to apply any measure of ours to his immensity. Let our faith, therefore, receive what our understanding is unable to comprehend, that the Spirit really unites things which are separated by local distance. The holy participation in his flesh and blood, by which Christ communicates his life unto us and refreshes us, is the method by which the thing signified to us in the sacred banquet, is offered unto us, and by which his promises are accomplished. Thus, if it be true that the visible sign is given us to seal the donation of the invisible substance, we ought to entertain a confident assurance, that in receiving the symbol of his body, we at the same time receive the body itself to the nourishment of our being unto immortality."<sup>11</sup>

Unbiased minds reading such statements of the doctrine, one suspects, must feel that the Calvinistic ideas, however refined, are really materialistic—little, if at all, better in this regard, than the transubstantiation or consubstantiation theories respectively of Rome and Luther. To insist that Divine grace is something that can be sacramentally transfused gives to the observance of the supper a sense too literal for spiritual safety. Does it not open the way for men to believe in an infusion of grace that incorporates itself with our nature in a subconscious region independent of any intelligent or intelligible activity on their part? If so, then its mysticism becomes magic, under the power of which, men are transmuted without being converted, consecrated without being sanctified, given a formal outward mark of godliness while utterly lacking of its inward spiritual power. True, Calvin exhausts his resources of language in endeavoring to make clear what he means by the objective spiritual presence, in distinction from the Roman and Lutheran hypotheses, but it would be rash to say that he succeeded in his undertaking. Some of his contemporary critics called his views on this particular phase of

<sup>11</sup> "Institutes," Book 4, Chap. 17, Sec. 8.

the subject "absurd and self-contradictory," whilst others since then, seizing different statements of his, have come to most divergent conclusions as to what he really did teach. Thus Maurice, for instance, who is one of his most searching antagonists, observes that the author of the "Institutes," by affirming that the purposes of the Holy Communion are accomplished "by the ascent of the soul to the glorified Christ in heaven, rather than by the descent of Christ's nature into the elements on the altar," denies that "there is any object present in the Sacrament of the Supper except that which under the creative power of faith is put there by the believing communicant."<sup>12</sup> The late Dr. Nevin, on the contrary, insists that Calvin "clearly taught an objective presence of Christ," but adds that "it is in the sacramental *transaction* as such," rather than in the elements of bread and wine, that the presence is to be discerned.<sup>13</sup> Without presuming to decide which of these learned theologians is correct in his interpretation of the Calvinistic teaching, we may content ourselves by saying that, aside from the more serious objection to that teaching which arises from its underlying assumptions, it is too vague to commend itself to one's approval, too metaphysical to be of genuine religious service to the present age, and too closely allied with priestly and sacrificial notions of religion to be accepted as a valid representation of Jesus' design in instituting the Lord's Supper.

These observations upon Calvin's dogmas on the Holy Communion, apply of course, with equal force to those also of the Roman Church and of all the Reformers—with one notable exception. The theory of the Ordinance as expounded by the great scholar and preacher of Zurich, has great advantage over others of the sixteenth century, on the score of being clear and easily understood, of freedom from mystical and metaphysical entanglements, and of rejecting entirely every form of a supposed outward transmission of Divine grace

<sup>12</sup> Cf. "The Kingdom of Christ," pp. 326-327.

<sup>13</sup> See "The Mystical Presence," p. 74.



through the priestly "administration" of the consecrated elements. Zwingli's doctrine, over against that of the system-builder of Geneva, the most influential and unfettered German theologian of the last century said of it, "is very clear and easily understood." And it is not a little significant that the school of thought, represented by Robertson, Stanley, and Farrar, in England, by Horace Bushnell and Phillips Brooks, in America—all of whom through Coleridge fell heir to Schleiermacher's conceptions, should have been inclined to accept with certain enriching modifications, the Zwinglian, rather than the Calvinistic, form of doctrine on this subject. To their views, duly qualified here and there in points of detail, the present writer should be willing to give unhesitating preference over that of Calvin, were it necessary to choose between the respective theories for which those names stand. From what has been said earlier in this discussion, it should be perfectly plain, however, that we have been fortunately carried far beyond such limitations of choice, by the progress that has attended comparatively recent scientific investigations and biblical studies.

This modern progress in knowledge, as already indicated, has been subversive of the foundation principles and presuppositions upon which so much of all the theologies of the past was built. In the light of to-day, it is neither allowable to attempt, nor possible to construct a sound edifice of religious doctrine, upon the antiquated and superseded assumptions of earlier systems. Among the foundation pillars that must carry the theological superstructure of the future, are the indisputable facts of science, and the historically established teachings of the Prophet of Nazareth. Room must be made, no matter what the cost, for these to stand in their sovereign majesty and strength. The conceptions of God and man, as originally taught by Jesus, must receive due recognition, in any doctrinal scheme that can be allowed to claim for itself the Christian name, and established facts must be frankly owned by those erecting such a scheme if it is to have a com-

manding authority and power among thoughtful men. This means, that instead of regarding man as having been plunged by an original "fall" into a hopelessly lost and forlorn condition of moral turpitude and spiritual ruin, in which he is left without God and without hope in the world, the view of him which Jesus' teaching inspires must be accepted, namely, that he is the frail, the imperfect, the pitied, and the loved, child of the Father in heaven, who is day by day mercifully ministering to his needs for spiritual growth, and leading him step by step toward the ultimate realization of the ideal manhood revealed in Christ Jesus. It means, that instead of interpreting the work of the incarnate Son of God as providing a fund of meritoriousness, which in an unmoral, substitutionary, way can be set to the credit of the sinner for his salvation, his perfectly sinless and absolutely holy life and character affords us a vision, which makes its own inspiring and uplifting, its reconciling and saving, moral appeal to those whose humanity he shared—an appeal which, in accordance to the faithful and obedient response to Jesus' instructions and example, it elicits, brings men into an ever-increasing fulness of communion with the Father. It means, that instead of regarding the Church—mentioned in only two Synoptic passages, one of which is of more than doubtful authenticity, and the other applicable only to an individual congregation—as the incarnate projection and continuation of Christ himself in human history, and, therefore, a living divine-human constitution and organism in the world, through membership in which alone, piety is practicable and salvation possible, this great and important institution should be looked upon as the body of Christian believers united by a common faith in and devotion to, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and associated together for the purposes of enlarged efficiency in social service, of bringing in and maintaining the Kingdom of God in the world.

Preoccupied by changed conceptions of God and man, of the person and office of Christ, of the nature and function of

the Church, such as those just now too imperfectly outlined, the present-day religious mind must proceed to formulate its theory of the Lord's Supper. The informing and controlling principles for this work, which as yet has not been adequately performed by constructive modern thought, are involved in such changed conceptions of fundamental truths. Sufficient work has been done, however, to enable one with some confidence to suggest certain directions that constructive thinking will and will not take, and certain characteristics of the resultant doctrine. It will surrender wholly and without regret what, for want of a more convenient and equally well understood and comprehensive term, may be called the "high-church" position. But it will not require us to accept in its stead the extreme opposite view which regards the Ordinance as nothing more than a bare memorial or commemorative service. The truth of the matter here, as is so generally the case, will be found to lie between extremes. The Holy Communion of the Lord's Supper—a designation of the service greatly to be preferred to the unscriptural word "Sacrament"—when ever and wherever observed, will be celebrated in obedience, of course, to the word of him who said: "This do in remembrance of me." This will be interpreted as meaning more than "to show forth his death till he come," more than to represent to us the sacrificial and atoning nature of Christ's death on the cross. The observance of the Supper "in remembrance" of Christ will by its symbols recall to us the reality of Jesus as an historic figure, whose perfect character is to us a sure pledge of the possibility of our achieving a satisfying likeness to himself. Thus, it is a symbolical representation of the "glorious Gospel of the blessed God" in its entirety, as taught and illustrated by Jesus in his intercourse with men. By solemn outward and visible sign, it conveys to us the message of Divine love and free forgiveness, and reminds us that to place ourselves in right relations with the Father and to achieve our appointed destiny, we must follow the way, embrace the truth, and live the life, of him who

sealed his confidence in the guidance of the Holy Spirit in his own blood. Just as Jesus, under constraint of his filial devotion to God, to righteousness, and to truth, and under the influence of his love for his brethren, to whom he desired to bequeath an unerring ideal of conduct, was willing to suffer and to die, rather than violate even the least of the Father's commandments, so the symbols of the Supper, tell us we should "follow in his steps," relying as the Master did for the vindication of our course of life, for our daily strength and constant support in this world, and for our assured bliss in the world to come, upon the unfailing mercy and grace of the Most High. As surely as bread and wine are given for the bodily needs, so surely shall "bread from heaven" be bestowed for the spiritual needs of those that are faithful.

Such a visible exhibition and solemn assurance of God's loving and forgiving, supporting and rewarding, goodness toward his children, does not by any means exhaust even the Godward significance that attaches to the celebration of the Holy Supper. But besides the Godward, there is also a manward side to the Ordinance. The thoughts suggested by the latter need corresponding recognition if the "communion" idea of its celebration is to be realized. As an act on man's part, it means for every individual participating with a congregation in the celebration of the Holy Communion, the public acceptance of God's proffered pardon, the humble reception of his strengthening and supporting grace, the devout acknowledgement of the authority and Lordship of Christ, the promise of loyalty to his Spirit and the instructions of his word, the unreserved consecration of self to the service of the Father and of his children. For the Congregation, the Holy Communion is the common and united act of owning and confessing Christ, their joint public declaration of trust in, and devotion to, him and to each other, and thus a spiritually significant bond of union and communion between themselves and their glorified Lord. For both the individual and the congregation, therefore, the celebration of the Holy Com-

munion is, and must always remain, an inestimably precious "means of grace," and that, as such, Christ Jesus our Lord, will honor and bless those observing it with its own "spiritual real presence" only those can doubt who do not believe that he is with his people "always even unto the end of the world."

BALTIMORE, MD.

## V.

### THE ETHICS OF CALVINISM.

BY JOHN S. STAHR, D.D., LL.D.

John Calvin was preëminently a theologian rather than a philosopher, and the manifold results which have flowed from his teaching in social and political life had their origin primarily in his theological views. Religion was with him fundamental, and what he taught and accomplished in the way of social organization and development, flowing directly from his theological principles, gave impulse to and determined the nature of all that stands for Calvinism in its historical development in church and state. In the nature of the case these principles in their concrete manifestation became social forces of great significance, and if, in the beginning, they were religious, they became ethical in their application to human conduct both in its individual and its social aspect. The ethics of Calvinism, accordingly, becomes profoundly interesting both from an historical and a practical point of view, inasmuch as Calvinism dominated so large a part of the theology of the churches of the Reformation, and a still larger part of the social and political development of the modern world.

1. The first thing that strikes the mind of any one conversant with the trend of modern philosophical and religious thought is the extreme rigor of Calvin's doctrine of original sin. Human nature is so totally depraved that it is incapable of the first step towards good works, and morality apart from regeneration by the Spirit of God is absolutely impossible. Although he concedes that there are traces of man's original nature still to be found, as in the sense of right and the voice of conscience, he has little sympathy with philosophical speculation and a positive abhorrence of both Cynicism and Stoi-

cism. Aristotle as the advocate of the *liberum arbitrium* falls under his condemnation; only Pato is recognized as having a dim perception in the distance of the Highest Good, but as he lacked the firm foundation of faith his wisdom which is not based on true piety nor the revelation of God in Christ, is nothing else than "appearance and smoke." And what is true of his wisdom is also true of his virtue.<sup>1</sup>

It follows, accordingly, that Calvin, who as a matter of course developed no formal system of ethics, has no room for or appreciation of philosophical ethics, and that the ethical principles which are involved in his system of thought and doctrine come under the head of Christian ethics. In their development the principal stress is laid on virtue and duty while the good is kept in the background, and the idea of freedom, the glorious liberty of the children of God, as will presently appear, is only imperfectly apprehended. \* This one-sided view of human life led to a conception of the state and of social development in which the influence of the church was still paramount, and which failed to recognize the fact that the state had a problem of its own to solve independent of formal control by or union with the church, a point that was reached only after a long course of development and the interaction of forces which it is not our province here to discuss. But Christian ethics has nothing to lose and much to gain by a candid recognition of the fact that religion and morality, although closely related, are not identical, nor do they stand in the relation of cause and effect. Morality has its own basis in the nature and constitution of man, and, in a sense, its own independent development, however much this development may be affected by religion. As a man's physical strength or his intellectual acumen is not increased by his becoming religious whilst yet he is physically and intellectually a better man because of his religion, so also his sense of moral obligation does not necessarily increase *pari passu* with the strength of his religious feeling whilst yet it must be freely conceded that

<sup>1</sup> Lobstein, "Die Ethik Calvins," p. 7.



religion fosters and inspires moral development, and that without it, in the long run, virtue will deteriorate and morality decline. The failure to recognize moral forces at work in society independently of religion or formal Christianity as such, marks Calvin, not as a reactionary, but as still different in spirit from present-day tendencies.

2. Man, totally depraved and ruined in the fall, is not only incapable of salvation by his own efforts, but, in addition, his salvation rests wholly on the will of God, who, in his eternal decree, has elected or predestinated some unto life and others unto death. Without such an election of grace neither repentance nor regeneration nor spiritual life is possible; and when by the grace of God, mediated through the gift of his only Son our Lord Jesus Christ, a new life is begotten in man it is to be attributed not to human volition but to the effective working of the grace of God. If it is objected that the condemnation of men unto death is unjust, the answer is that God in his sovereign majesty, for good and wise reasons, does as it pleases him, and that the love and favor extended towards those who are redeemed are all the greater. If it is said that such an election of men unto life irrespective of any merits of their own is unethical in that it leaves the way open for gross sin and immorality on the part of the elect, and makes no room for training and admonition, Calvin answers sharply that such an inference is profane, inasmuch as those who are chosen unto life are chosen unto good works, and that the preaching of the gospel, admonition and training are the means in God's hands by which his purpose is realized.<sup>2</sup> This harsh doctrine is often singled out as the distinctive feature of Calvinism and is often designated by that name. But the fact is that it was by no means peculiar to Calvin. Luther held it just as firmly (although it is not emphasized to the same extent in Lutheran theology); and both Luther and Calvin derived it, as well as the doctrine of total depravity, from St. Augustine. It involves a theory of the human will which is

<sup>2</sup> "Institutes," III., 23, 12.

by no means obsolete at the present day, the theory of determinism. Indeed it may safely be said that it has the trend of present day psychological thought (though from a different point of view) largely in its favor. There is scarcely any one at this time who holds the theory of absolute indifferentism. A man's character, his training and antecedents all enter into his volitions, and, as Jonathan Edwards so stoutly maintains, the will is governed by *motives*. There are, as is well known, three forms of determinism. First that of blind fate, a power that arbitrarily rules the destinies of men (from *Cædipus* to Amos Judd); secondly, that of divine providence or predestination, according to which God in his sovereign power or for a wise and glorious purpose orders all the events of human life; thirdly, that of the evolutionary school who teach that every act is the effect of an efficient cause, the resultant of all the forces in and around the man so that only one outcome is possible. Freedom in this way resolves itself into the ability to do that to which one's own nature prompts in response to the challenges of the environment appealing both to native and acquired tendencies. "His (man's) will is free in the sense that at any moment what he will attend to and cherish depends upon *him*, upon his attitude toward the situation he confronts. Whether it is free in the further sense that this attitude would be unpredictable even by a perfect intelligence that knew his inborn nature and entire previous experience, is a question unanswered by science and disputed by philosophers."<sup>3</sup> Determinists say no, and it is conceivable that all the events which bear upon any human life are so ordered and disposed that a man freely chooses the very thing which necessity imposes upon him. This seems to be Calvin's way of solving the problem of human responsibility in view of the divine decree and fore-ordination. *Sic e Dei praedestinatione pendet dominum perditio, et causa et materia in ipsis reperiatur; cadit homo Dei providentia sic ordinante, sed vitio suo cadit.*<sup>4</sup> Thus

<sup>3</sup> Thorndike's "Elements of Psychology," p. 281.

<sup>4</sup> "Institutes," III., 23, 6-9.

he holds man responsible for his own misdeeds and gives God the praise for his salvation. But even if we grant that this saves human responsibility, it does not save the ethical character of God unless upon the assumption that for some wise reason unknown to us, for the accomplishment of a greater good, such fore-ordination were necessary. It has been said that for the glory of God a man ought to be willing to suffer eternal damnation; but surely man's moral consciousness has developed beyond the point at which any man's damnation, abstractly considered, should be regarded as a necessity, or as contributing to the glory of God. Much better is the conception of God as a loving Father who desireth not the death of the sinner, of a kind and gracious Father

"Dem allemal das Herze bricht,  
Wir kommen oder kommen nicht."

3. The new life is the gift of God, but it is not indiscriminately bestowed. It comes in a concrete form, mediated by faith, in the fellowship of believers who constitute the church, the body of Christ, and are made partakers of the merits of the life and death of their Living Head. The ground of good works, of the ethical or spiritual life of the believer, is thus said to be faith; and the fruits of faith are good works. But closer investigation shows, that, after all, faith is not the real source or ground of good works, but only the means by which Christ in the fulness of His saving power is apprehended and appropriated, and He works in us to will and to do according to His good pleasure at the same time that we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. The church, the services of the sanctuary, the preaching of the word, and the sacraments, are means and channels through which this appropriation by faith is facilitated and made real; and they are therefore, to be considered as grace-bearing ordinances. It is to be observed, however, that their efficacy is not magical but dependent upon the faith of the recipient. Dr. T. C. Hall<sup>5</sup> denounces Calvin's view of the church, the ministry, and the

<sup>5</sup> *Hibbert Journal*, October, 1907.

sacraments, as being in theory Roman Catholic rather than Protestant, and looks with much favor upon Luther's system notwithstanding its thoroughgoing sacramentalism. "In Luther's system sacramentalism was an unfortunate and illogical intrusion upon his fundamental thought . . . In spite of Luther's unfortunate realism in his interpretation of *Hoc est corpus meum*, he remains substantially unaffected in his ethics (though not wholly) by the element of sacramental magic. For Calvin the imparted grace of the sacrament is an ethical element of first importance." That is to say that the theory of a substantial presence in the sacrament for believers and unbelievers alike, working salvation in the former and damnation or judgment in the latter is of little ethical significance; but the conception of a real spiritual presence mediated and appropriated by the faith of the believing recipient is an ethical element of the first importance and involves sacramental magic! But surely Dr. Hall's view of salvation eliminates the idea of *grace* altogether, and makes the whole process purely human except so far as men are influenced by the teaching of our Lord, or inspired by His lofty example. One feels disposed to call this a very bald kind of rationalism.

4. Faith, leading to good works and delivering the sinner from guilt and unrighteousness, necessarily produces in man a joyful sense of freedom. Calvin's conception of freedom, however, it must be confessed, is, in this connection, negative rather than positive. It is freedom from the slavery of sin and from the curse which rests upon the sinner. The heavy burden of guilt is removed, and the consciousness of a divine sonship, of peace and love springs up in the heart because the sinner is justified and made acceptable to God. His works also, although they may be imperfect, since they are the fruit of the spirit, become acceptable, and they abound more and more unto sanctification. In addition to this Calvin urges the importance of limiting the exercise of Christian freedom wherever such exercise would give offence to the faith and con-

science of weak brethren,\* and he combats with equal earnestness the narrowing of Christian liberty by the Catholics and the abuse of it by the Libertines. There is, however, in Calvin's whole treatment of the subject no such enthusiastic glorification of liberty as is found for instance, in Luther's "*Die Freiheit des Christenmenschen*." The difference between the two reformers in this respect, is no doubt, largely a matter of temperament and of individual experience. But it is very evident that the joyous note of absolute freedom is restrained in Calvin by the ever-present voice of conscience imperatively demanding the observance of the moral law. This legalism is one of the chief points of attack on the part of the present day critics of Calvinism and Puritanism and there is, perhaps, a partial justification for such criticism; but the full discussion of the question must be deferred until we have advanced another step in our discussion.

5. Faith leads to good works; but good works are not such as proceed merely from the natural inclinations and impulses of a regenerate man. They are good only as they conform to the standard of the moral law, the keeping of which, as found especially in the decalogue, is obligatory upon the Christian. Stress is laid, therefore, upon the exact fulfillment of the law's demands, not indeed of the demands of the ceremonial law, but of all that can fairly be construed as belonging to the spiritual essence of the law. Two consequences are likely to follow from this principle, and it will hardly be claimed that Calvinism has wholly escaped either of them. In the first place there is danger of unnecessary rigor, and the magnification of small things because the law is apprehended in a more or less mechanical way. This appears in the form of Sabbath observance, and in the minute regulations of the details of family life and social intercourse which have from time to time become manifest in Puritanism. The ridiculous accounts we get of the so-called Blue Laws are no doubt greatly exaggerated, for such laws prevailed only locally, in com-

\* "*Institutes*," III., 19, 10-12.

munities where eccentric and fanatical minds were in authority. But it is not difficult to discover a plenty of instances where unnecessary severity prevailed, and austerity of life and conduct were regarded as the best evidence of a saintly character. In the second place the stress laid upon small things, the tithing of "mint, anise and cummin," may easily lead to hypocrisy, the putting on of a fair outside to hide the corruption that is within. It is well known with what contempt the cavaliers spoke of the Roundheads as "ranting hypocrites;" and it is but natural that among the followers of Calvin and in the development of Puritanism there should have been found those who deserved the title. But what is the fair verdict of history? Was there ever an army the general morality of which, whether in service in the field, or whether disbanded and absorbed in the avocations of private life, was as high, and the members of which, individually and collectively, notwithstanding their lack of æsthetic culture, and the ruthlessness with which they destroyed churches, and cathedrals, were as free from the vices of camp life as that of Cromwell? Were there ever communities the average morality of which, notwithstanding the oddities and excrescences of which we hear so much, was higher than in the colonies and states in which Calvinism has been the ruling force? And its dominant note was not all gloom and severity. It is doubtful whether family affection, tender love, and friendship ever abounded more fully than under these very conditions, if, at least, one may trust the evidence afforded by family traditions, history, and literature. The aspersions cast upon Calvinism from this point of view, must, as will presently appear, be taken with a large grain of allowance. It is true that the spirit of legalism, the painful sense of duty, the omnipresent voice of conscience with its "thou shalt," and "thou shalt not," is not the highest plane of duty. That is found in the spirit of love and a joyous sense of freedom. But it is love of the right; it is freedom in the ability to enter into duty with hearty spontaneity. It means, not less, but more, of the law, because the law now

becomes enthroned within, and the spirit cries out: "Oh, how I love thy law," "It is my meat and drink to do the will of God." Let him who has reached that stage look down upon Calvinism and criticise it. But let not the plea of liberty excuse men from the discharge of duty, or the fact that the observance of the ten commandments is irksome serve as an excuse for breaking them! Is it not better to stand up manfully to the discharge of duty, even if it costs self-denial and hardship, than, on the plea that love is higher than law, to do the right thing when one feels like it, and fail to respond to the call of duty when there is no inclination towards it, and wait for a "more convenient season"?

6. If the moral law as set forth in the decalogue is the standard by which the Christian's conduct is to be regulated, it is not difficult to determine what is for him the line of duty in the various concrete relations of life. Duties to self, social duties, duties to church and state, are all based upon the nature and significance of these various interests, and enforced by the demands of the divine law. For the Christian, therefore, the law is not a means only for teaching him his own sinfulness, but it is also a means of growth in holiness, in harmony with its original beneficent purpose, in that it requires of man the very things which are essential to the perfection of his life. The resultant system is, therefore, in accord with what is generally called Duty Ethics which finds the highest good in the fulfillment of the moral law as grounded in the will of God.

The system of religious and ethical doctrine which we have tried to present in brief outline is naturally subjected to criticism by the adherents of other schools; and the sternness of the Calvinistic discipline may easily be made to appear unfriendly if not positively hostile to the spirit of the modern world. If this were all, it would only be necessary to appeal to history to secure for the system its own vindication as one of the great working forces of the Reformation, the fruitfulness of which, notwithstanding the limitations to which it is



necessarily subject, is apparent along the whole line of progress in morality and religion, and especially in the development of civil and religious liberty. But, following the lead of their master, the Ritschlian school of theologians have endeavored to show that Calvin, far from being a leader in Protestant thought, was really a reactionary, and that his theory of church and state, and the ethical principles of his system are in form and spirit Roman Catholic. "In so far as the ideal of Calvinism is anti-Catholic, this is due to the instigation of Luther; in so far as it departs from Luther, it goes back to the ideal of the Franciscans—of the Franciscans and Anabaptists."<sup>7</sup> The cry, started by Ritschl, was taken up by Loofs, Schulze, and Troeltsch, and it has recently been reëchoed in this country by Dr. T. C. Hall as mentioned on page 233. On the other hand, the *Princeton Review*, January, 1909, contains the translation of a masterly article by E. Doumergue in which the incorrectness and injustice of these charges are set forth with unusual vigor and clearness. We are not concerned here with the political aspect of the question raised by these writers; nor do we propose to enter upon its dogmatic aspect. But our subject makes it incumbent upon us to inquire first whether Calvin can in any sense be said to stand ethically on the same plane with the Franciscans and the monastic system of the Roman Catholic church; and secondly whether there is anything distinctive in his system that leads to the modern Protestant conception of life in general from the ethical point of view. The answer to these inquiries will bring to view Calvin's real position as a reformer, and show in what particulars the Reformed Church has been so large a factor in developing the conscience of the individual, not only in determining his duty to the church and the state, but also in the regulation of his private life in his daily walk and conversation.

The charge that the ethical system of Calvin is in spirit essentially Roman Catholic rests upon two assumptions. First,

<sup>7</sup> Albrecht Ritschl, "Geschichte des Pietismus," 1880, I., p. 76.

that it tests all actions by an absolute norm which finds expression in some form of outward authority instead of being based upon the inward compulsion of conscience (T. C. Hall). Secondly, that it looks upon the world as primarily evil, and the present life as tolerable only in the degree that it renounces the world and makes itself gradually free from its contamination by the practice of the most rigid abstemiousness and self-denial. In other words it is in essence a system of aceticism.

So far as the first is concerned, it is sufficient to say that the statement is not in accordance with the facts. Calvin recognizes no infallible authority in church or state except as it is in harmony with the Scriptures, and there is no infallible interpretation of the latter except as they authenticate themselves to the conscience through the Holy Spirit. There is no infallible authority in the church, neither pope nor council. While the government is not congregational or democratic, it is presbyterial or representative. Elders and deacons are ordained by the ministry, but they are elected by the congregation, and the people thus have a voice in their government, a form not inaptly called "democracy tempered by aristocracy." There is, therefore, no closed system as in the Catholic Church, and the spirit in which actions are to be tested is both different in principle from the beginning, and it has developed on a different plane in the later history of Protestantism.

As regards the charge of aceticism it must be said first of all that Calvin certainly did not teach or approve of Roman Catholic asceticism. If asceticism means the renunciation of social life and comfort for solitude, self-mortification, and religious devotion; if it means the renunciation of the world and worldly occupation to lead the life of a hermit, or to take refuge from the interests, trials and temptations of secular life in a monastery, there is not a trace of it to be found in Calvinism. If, however, it means excessive austerity and self-denial, practiced in daily life in the midst of the busy

activities of the world, it is not Roman Catholic asceticism. Weber, who, according to Doumergue, accords to Calvin a much higher social influence than to Lutheranism, calls it intra-mundane Asceticism, a word in which he sums up the moral, practical and social tendency of Protestantism, while he sums up modern culture in the word Capitalism.<sup>8</sup> He mean, of course, the strictness in morals which is a characteristic feature of the Calvinistic system. But the use of the word asceticism in this sense is unfortunate, because it is so easily misunderstood. Calvin is strict in morals and he emphasizes the importance of self-denial. But he is not alone in this. St. Paul did the same thing when he spoke of mortifying the members which are upon the earth, and our Lord, when he made cross-bearing a condition of discipleship. It is true that in this connection Calvin uses strong terms and speaks sometimes with great vehemence when he characterizes the corruption of the flesh and the sinful tendencies of the world. But St. Paul, too, knows of a law in his members which is at variance with the law in his mind; he speaks of a vile body that is finally to be transformed into a glorious body; and he prays to be delivered from the body of this death. Our Lord, too, puts in sharp contrast the spiritual life and the natural life, when He says: "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." It is unscientific and unfair to bring forward the strong expressions used by Calvin when he wishes to enforce the necessity of self-denial and the overcoming of the world, and to pass by the entire body of his teaching as regards the right use of the world and the enjoyment of life.

Calvin not only does not encourage a retreat from the world, but he insists on the conquest of the world; he not only allows the use of the world as a matter of necessity to maintain life in a prison from which men ought to desire to make their escape as soon as possible, but he also sees the beauty of the

<sup>8</sup>Max Weber, "Die Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Capitalismus."

world and the pleasures of life in the varied interests to be held and enjoyed in the furtherance of a rational human development. "Speaking of the right use of earthly blessings, he declares we do not have to abstain from this world's goods, not even from those which seem more conducive to pleasure than to our necessities. We are to use them for our needs as for our delectation." "Some good men among the 'saints' have permitted man to use this world's goods only in so far as necessity demanded. Undoubtedly, these saints were well intentioned; but they were none the less mistaken; 'they practiced a too great rigor'; they were more 'strict' than God's word. And this overstrictness is 'very dangerous.'"<sup>9</sup> Again: "If we consider for what purpose God created food, we shall find that He wished to provide not only for our necessity, but also for our pleasure and recreation. So as to raiment, besides necessity, He has regard to that which is proper and becoming. As to herbs, trees, and fruits, besides their various useful qualities, He has enhanced them by their beauty, and gives us added pleasure in their perfume. If this were not so, the prophet would not have numbered among the divine blessings, the wine that rejoiceth man's heart and oil that maketh his face to shine. . . . The good qualities that all things have by nature show us how we ought to enjoy them. . . . Do we think that, our Lord having given such beauty to the flowers which present themselves to the sight, it not lawful to be touched with pleasure in seeing them? Do we think that He has given them so sweet an odor, and does not wish that man should delight to smell them. . . . Have done, then with that inhuman philosophy, which . . . not only maliciously deprives us of the lawful fruit of the divine beneficence, but also cannot be realized without depriving man of all sentiment, and making him a block of wood."<sup>10</sup>

Again referring to the chapter on Christian Liberty,

<sup>9</sup> Doumergue, in *Princeton Review*, quoting "Institutes," III., 10, 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, "Institutes," III., 10, 2-3.

Doumergue says: "At the outset he [Calvin] denies all monastic asceticism, as if God took pleasure in the material sacrifices. He shows that the ground is slippery; and that once the foot is on the slope, one must go to the end. The history of certain saints proves it. With virile good sense he writes: "When once the conscience is bridled and held in check, it enters an infinite labyrinth and a deep abyss, whence it is not easy to escape. If one begins to doubt whether it is lawful for him to use linen sheets, shirts, handkerchiefs, and napkins, he will not long be sure about using hemp, and at last he will vacillate as to the use of tow. For he will wonder if he might not eat without a napkin and do without handkerchiefs. Should he deem daintier food unlawful, he will at last not dare to eat either bread or common viands with an assured conscience before God, since it will always occur to him that he might sustain life with still meaner food. If he scruples to drink good wine, he will afterward not dare to drink the worst with a good conscience, or water that is unusually sweet and pure; in fine, it will come to this, that he will hold it a great sin to trample on a straw in his path" ("Inst.," III., 19, 7). And again: "Why are the rich cursed, who have now received their consolation, who are full, who laugh, who sleep on beds of ivory, who add possession to possession, at whose feasts are harps, lutes, tambourines and wine. Surely the ivory and gold and riches are good creatures (*i. e.*, things created by God) permitted and even appointed for the use of men, and nowhere is laughing forbidden, or being full (*saturari*), or the acquiring of new possessions, or delight in musical instruments, or drinking wine, etc." ("Inst.," III., 19, 9). How does this harmonize with what Ritchie wrote in 1880: "As Calvin personally did not need any recreation, he saw only pressing temptations to sin in the social forms of recreation and in the luxury that followed them. . . . For this reason he combated everything that pertained to the gay and free joyousness of life and luxury." The quotations speak for themselves.

Let this suffice so far as concerns the charge of being Roman Catholic in spirit rather than Protestant. And now, is there anything distinctive in the Calvinistic system that leads to the modern Protestant conception of life from the ethical point of view? Max Weber, in the articles already referred to says yes; it is found in what he designates Capitalism. Here again the word is unfortunate because it is now often used with a sinister meaning. It would be better to say Industrialism, or still better Vocational Consciousness. Weber means to say that the Roman Catholic ideal of life lay apart from and above secular occupations in the line of trades or commerce. The Latin peoples have no word for a vocation of this kind; but the Germanic *Beruf* found its real meaning and application with the advent of Protestantism. Luther recognized the fact that labor at the anvil or behind the plow, in the house and in the kitchen, if conscientiously performed is just as acceptable to God as any other form of conscientious service. But the development of this idea is preëminently one of the merits of Calvin's system, and it has gone forward *pari passu* with the development of civil liberty with great rapidity and splendid results in Calvinistic countries and peoples. Weber says: "Without doubt already in the Middle Ages certain attempts at appraising daily toil in this way are found. But what is entirely new is this: the esteeming the accomplishment of duty in the earthly vocation as the ideal of personal morality. This it is that has logically produced the opinion of the religious importance of the daily task in this world and which has given birth to the idea of vocation. Thus that which finds expression in this idea of vocation, is the central dogma of all the old Protestant denominations, which rejects the distinction between the precepts and the counsels of Christian ethics, which indicates, as the only means of leading a life agreeable to God, not the excelling of worldly morality by monastic aceticism, but the being content solely with the fulfillment of one's duties in the world, as the situation of each requires, that is to say, fulfilling his vocation."

Here, then, are two social forces of far-reaching importance: A strict morality that is yet free from the gloom of asceticism, and the consciousness of a service well-pleasing to God in the discharge of the duties which arise in one's earthly vocation. These have entered into the life of the modern world most fully and have produced the most beneficent results among and through Calvinistic people. The world will not soon forget what the Huguenots were to France, and how much that country lost and other countries gained, morally and industrially, when after the revocation of the edict of Nantes they were driven from her borders. And where are there to be found nobler examples of heroism, love of liberty, devotion to duty, cleanliness, and purity of life than in Scotland, Holland, and the United States. Indeed the Calvinistic peoples have stood forth in the world as champions of liberty, exponents of morality and religion, and leaders in the development of industry and social progress. And such is the case not despite but by virtue of the fundamental principles of the Protestant reformation in the shaping of which Calvin bore so large and honorable a part.

LANCASTER, PA.



## VI.

### CALVIN AS A PREACHER.

BY PROF. JOHN C. BOWMAN, D.D.

The religious world knows comparatively little of the merits of Calvin as a preacher, because of his overshadowing fame as a theologian, commentator, and ecclesiastical organizer. The biographers of Calvin, from Theodore Beza, the earliest, down to the latest, make but scant reference to Calvin as a preacher. But fame is not always limited by or dependent upon facts recorded by the historian. The influence of a great moral personality can never be fully measured by what has been written. Although little has been written of Calvin, eulogistic of his power and his style as a preacher, he is, notwithstanding, placed in the list of the world's great preachers; and the judgment of history is justified. Calvin was called of God to be a preacher of righteousness. Like St. Paul, he believed that he was directly commissioned by Christ to be a minister of truth. "The ministry which I received from Christ I am bound, if need be, to maintain with my blood."<sup>1</sup> As he felt the touch of God's hand upon him, that was sufficient to supply the lack of formal ordination through the hands of either Roman Catholic or Protestant priest. He neither asked nor cared for any stronger credential. Nor are we asked to reconcile the irregularity with the ecclesiastical rule which Calvin himself, as disciplinarian, so rigidly enforced upon others. More than one Melchizedek has appeared in history, to whom has been ascribed the divine right to officiate at the altar and from the pulpit.

The beginnings of Calvin's career as a preacher are traceable

<sup>1</sup> Reply to Cardinal Sadolet.

to the period of his academic and juristic training in France, while a student under the patronage of the Church at Noyon. His religious spirit and moral earnestness increased with his advance in learning. But strict and diligent as he had been in his religious observances, they failed to give rest to his soul or peace to his conscience. By day and by night the thought of God pursued him, filling him with anxiety and dread. By means of a sudden conversion he was subdued by God and made willing to know and follow the truth.<sup>2</sup> The "sudden conversion" does not signify, as according to present popular usage, the beginning of conscious religious experience, but rather a changed and fixed attitude toward the great religious movement of the age. This crisis in his early life led Calvin to combine with his study of law a more earnest study of the Bible; "being," as he says, "inflamed with an intense desire to make progress in the knowledge of true godliness."<sup>3</sup> "Although I myself was as yet but a mere novice and tyro, I was quite surprised to find that all who had any desire after purer doctrine were continuously coming to me to learn."<sup>4</sup>

After his father's death he returned to Paris and devoted himself exclusively to theology. As the reformation-movement was making itself felt in France, Calvin preached frequently in the meetings of the evangelical party, closing commonly with the words: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" His forceful reasoning and courageous spirit drew around him the friends of the Reformation, who welcomed him to their councils as an influential adviser. While later on he was destined to become in Geneva and Strassburg the conspicuous leader of men in public affairs, his natural inclination and personal desires were averse to the excitement of public life. He longed for quietness that he might apply himself to his favorite studies. His mind was set on literary work. Upon his visit to Geneva (1536) he was constrained,

<sup>2</sup> Preface to "Commentary on the Psalms."

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

almost coerced, by Farel, to become his helper and coadjutor. No plea in behalf of his own inclinations and plans were allowed to prevail. "Master William Farel," he wrote in the preface to his "*Comentary on the Psalms*," "retained me in Geneva, not so much by his counsel and exhortation, as by means of a fearful adjuration which caused me to feel as if God Himself had laid his hand upon me to hold me fast. When he saw that he effected nothing by entreaties, he threw his address into the form of an imprecation, praying God to curse the leisure and rest I sought for study, if I refused to lend help in such great need. This word had such a terrifying effect upon me that I gave up my journey, though, from a sense of diffidence, I still refused to bind myself to any particular charge." In Geneva he began his work with the public exposition of the Scriptures in St. Peter's Church. It is related that after his first sermon people flocked in crowds to his residence to testify their delight, and he was obliged to promise those who had not been able to hear him on this occasion to preach again on the following day. Owing to the favorable impression made by his preaching and the desire expressed by many for the continuance of his services, he consented to assist Farel in his pastoral work.

Upon his enforced withdrawal from Geneva to Strassburg, Calvin again resolved to follow his personal inclination by devoting himself without distraction to the pursuit of his favorite studies; but, yielding to the entreaties of Bucer, contrary to his desire and inclination, his services were again enlisted in pastoral activity, and as an Academy lecturer. His return to Geneva in 1541, to resume command as leading theologian, ecclesiastical organizer and chief pastor, was only through surrender, after repeated refusal, to the pressure of the irresistible persuasion of Farel, Bucer, and others of compelling influence. To a friend he wrote: "There is no place in the world which I fear so much as Geneva." Yet he yielded to the request for his return, with tears in his eyes, saying: "I offer to God my slain heart in sacrifice; and force my

bound spirit to obedience." There is something pathetically admirable in such a surrender of a strong martyr-spirit to the challenge of duty, as an inviolable call of God. By the previous calls to the ministry, and especially by this final call, Calvin experienced his ordained right and power to preach the Gospel without the imposition of ecclesiastical hands through the formal act of ordination.

The few foregoing instances in the life of Calvin are given with a view to aid in arriving at a fair and just estimate of the character of Calvin as a preacher. It was the thought of God, the consciousness of God, that had supreme mastery over the mind, the will, and the affections of Calvin; God, the omniscient, omnipresent, all-glorious ruler in the heavens and over the earth. "The will of God must have the mastery."<sup>3</sup> Service must be rendered unto Him at all hazard and at whatever cost. Whatever is thought, or said, or suffered, must be done unto "the glory of God." This phrase, "the glory of God," which so frequently appears in the writings and preaching of Calvin, expressed the dominant and controlling motive of his life and ministry. It is a glory which, while it brightens the heavens, overshadows all things earthly; while it exalts the majesty and sovereignty of God, obscures, belittles, and almost deadens the nature of man. Calvin's mind was so filled with the thought of God as transcendent in the heavens, of God who reveals his glory through the exercise of his sovereign will, that little, if any room was given to the thought of God as immanent in his world; of God who reveals his glory in the sunshine, the beauty, and the joy of our earthly life. It is the fear of God rather than the love of God, that is voiced through the theology and teaching of Calvin; God as the Ruler and Judge of the world rather than God as the Father of all, is the object of his reverence. It was to the glory of God, as thus apprehended, that Calvin offered his "slain heart in sacrifice." And as he thus subjected himself to the sovereign will of God, so, consistently,

<sup>3</sup> Sermon on the theme "Enduring Persecution for Christ."

did he require of all men that they should conform to the same exalted standard. Sparing not himself, he would not spare others. He was both the champion and victim of the theological system which he propounded. But it should be no matter of surprise that Calvin failed to compass more completely the nature of God. The greatest minds, at best, can discern but a segment of the infinite circle of deity. The theologian of later ages, even of our own advanced age, may not count himself to have fully apprehended.

But incomplete and defective as was Calvin's conception of God, no man was ever more intensely devoted to his God, or to his conception of God, than was Calvin. His God-idea gave increased strength to his powerful intellect; it made effective his ecclesiastical discipline, and made possible the almost world-wide sway of his great personality. Such a champion of God, of His sovereignty and glory,, must needs be an acknowledged leader of men, and, sooner or later, come to hold high rank in the list of the world's great preachers.

Attention has been directed to Calvin's view of God, and to his immovable conviction of the correctness of his doctrine, as constituting the basic element of his preaching. Whatever else may be gathered from various sources, referring to the content and style of Calvin's preaching, however interesting such additional material may be, it is but incidental and of secondary value. Calvin always preached with the "accent of conviction," as one having authority; for, as an expounder of the Word of God, he ever strove to be true to the Word as he apprehended it. Supplementing this primary element of strength, namely, devotion to God, and to the Scriptures as the supreme rule of faith and life, Calvin as a preacher was reinforced by the rare qualities of his character, and the acquisitions of a broad and profound culture, which placed him in the front rank of the thinkers and scholars of his age. Intellect and will were the prominent properties of his personality. His intellect was of the highest order; it was acute, penetrating, profound and comprehensive. His own high

intellectuality stimulated his zeal for an intelligent faith. Intelligence, to Calvin, was the mother of piety. His system of religion admits of no separation between the spiritual and the intellectual. As it appeals primarily to the intellect, it is the foe of all shallow, emotional, or sentimental views of Christian truth. In his day, as at later times, it exercised a powerful influence on the thoughtful and educated. Calvin was a dialectician who sought to persuade his hearers by reasoned conviction. He was not an orator who allures and wins his hearers by the excitement of the emotions. He was unlike Luther who aroused sentiment and emotion, and drew men by their hearts. Calvin bound his hearers fast in the "serried links of his iron logic." Powerful in intellect, Calvin was no less strong in will. He was firm as a rock. His purpose, once fixed, had an inflexibility which no opposition could overcome. Like all masterful spirits he trusted in himself as well as in God. Notwithstanding his advocacy of theocratic rule, he was an autocrat. Although he held no political office, he ruled Geneva with an iron hand. His acts and his words were invested with the command of law. He preached with the authority of a prophet: "Thus saith the Lord." The denial of his authority as an interpreter of the Word of God was an insult to the "honor of Christ." So closely did he identify his own cause with that of God. This, in part, explains his severity, intolerance, and what many have regarded as spiritual tyranny. He held and declared that the honor of God and the salvation of the world depended upon the doctrines which he proclaimed, and that they who opposed them assailed God. There was warrant for the title which in derision was applied to Calvin—"the Pope of Protestantism." It was a tribute to his eminent superiority as a leader and establisher of the Protestant cause. To this he attained by an intellectual, spiritual, and moral strength, despite the defects which appear in his character and public ministry, and which tend to detract from his fame.

To the sterner qualities which have been noted, must be

added the more attractive gifts and graces which Calvin employed in the service of preaching. A theologian with a lawyer's training, a logician of critical acumen, a student of history and Christian antiquity, he was at the same time a master of literary style, unsurpassed since the day of Tertullian. At the age of twenty-two, before he began to preach, he was, according to Scalinger, the most learned man in Europe. Archbishop of Cashel, who dissented from his theological opinions, thus testifies to his superior ability: "He was inferior to none of his contemporaries in general ability, and superior to almost all in the art, as well as elegance, of composition; in the perspicuity and arrangement of ideas, and in the structure of his periods." His style was admirably fitted to his thought, simple and accurate, direct and forceful, and marked by that transparent clearness which is the distinguishing feature of the best French oratory. He thought and wrote clearly in short, intelligible sentences. He rarely indulged in long periods. Beza, who was his personal friend and a spectator of his conduct for sixteen years, and who professes to have given a faithful account both of his life and of his death, says: "Calvin despised fine speaking, and was rather abrupt in his language, but he wrote admirably, and no theologian of his time expressed himself so clearly, so impressively and accurately as he. Proper and dignified expression never failed him, whether he was writing or speaking." Again, comparing Calvin with his contemporaries, Farel and Viret, he says of him: "*Tot verba tot pondera*," and describes him as "a despiser of great eloquence and sparing in words; so good a writer that no one at his time had written with more dignity, with greater purity or acuteness." In very similar terms does the Roman Catholic Audin express appreciation of the purity and the exactness of Calvin's style: "Never does the proper word fail him; he calls it, and it comes." In defense of himself against the charge of Westphal that he was a "mere babbling, fanciful haranguer," he said: "All the world knows my writings and my



speaking are characterized by cautious brevity, and that I invariably keep to the point which I have undertaken to discuss." His discourses, generally, commence with a proposition on which the entire structure of the sermon is made to rest. With uniform solidity of learning, and clear, cogent reasoning, he constructs his argument, and enforces it with frequent citations from the Scriptures. Like the preachers of the Reformation period generally, his primary purpose was to set forth the doctrinal and moral teaching of the Word of God. The words of the preacher like the words of the Lord must be spirit and life. "True preaching," said Calvin, "must not be dead, but living and effective; no parade of rhetoric, but the Spirit of God must resound in the voice in order to operate with power." While he doubtless attained to a greater or less degree of rhetorical art, he never cultivated it. Display of oratory he condemned as the expression of ambition and vanity; and he decried all purposed effort to give lustre to speech by the studied use of method and arrangement.

It was his invariable custom to preach extemporaneously. Even in his expository lectures he took nothing to his desk but the Scriptural text. It is nowhere mentioned that he ever wrote a sermon. In a letter referring to the twenty-two sermons on the Eighth Psalm, he says: "They have been printed simply as they could be gathered from my mouth in the church. You there see our style and ordinary mode of teaching." He frequently declared that the power of God could only pour itself forth in extemporaneous speech. In his letter to the Duke of Somerset, he expressed himself very distinctly against the writing of sermons, which was the invariable rule in the Church of England. "I say this to your Highness because there is little of living preaching in your kingdom, sermons there being mostly read or recited." Calvin spoke slowly, and could therefore be easily followed by those who took notes. To the note-taker we are indebted for all the sermons which have been preserved. Much of his work, also,

as a commentator, owes its preservation to the zeal of his auditors who wrote from his oral delivery what he afterwards prepared for the press. Scalinger, who had heard Calvin, says: "Calvin, being asthmatical, speaking very deliberately, it is easy to write down all that he says." Often he would make long pauses, giving his hearers time to fix his thoughts in their minds. At times he would divert from the line of powerful argument, and make satirical applications, intended to render disbelievers ridiculous in their own eyes. And when the honor of God was in question, or when he contended with the enemies of order and of the church, his anger poured forth with vehemence in intemperate displeasure. Hard, intolerant, and relentless was his attitude towards his enemies; for he regarded them as the enemies of God. The most effective club he could find for their resistance and defeat was the Word of God. And so, approvingly, and with the characteristic spirit of his times, does Beza describe his hero in conflict with his enemies: "Calvin was a kind of Christian Hercules who subdued many ministers by the mightiest of all clubs, the Word of God. As many adversaries as Satan stirred up against him, so many trophies did the Lord bestow upon his servant." Ordinarily the manner of Calvin was calm, refined, dignified, impressive, indicative of the high and solemn regard which he cherished for the sacred office whose specific purpose he believed to be the reformation of individual character, and the implanting of a holy, evangelical life in the community.

The discourses of Calvin usually were of moderate length. His practical expositions of the twelve minor prophets, and his sermons on the Pauline epistles, occupied rather less than a half hour than more. Likewise his one hundred and fifty sermons on the Book of Job, which were delivered without any studied preparation, are with few exceptions brief. These sermons are regarded as among his most excellent pulpit productions. Beza, in a preface to this work, says that the sermons were attended with such a blessing in the whole of

France, that they were daily recited, especially where there was a want of preachers, both in the churches and families. Calvin experienced peculiar pleasure in the interpretation of this portion of Scripture, because he regarded it as especially applicable to his own time and to his personal experiences. For the beautiful poetic spirit and structure of the Book of Job, and for its dramatic features which charm the critical and analytical scholars of our day, Calvin had no concern, no sympathy. To his mind the book was simply a theodicy and a compendium of practical religious philosophy. "As we are in the hand of God we ought to submit ourselves entirely to his will; we should continually glorify him even when his hand is heavy upon us, and we understand not the cause of the infliction." So, every phase of the teaching of the book justifies and glorifies God, while at the same time it ministers instruction both to sinner and saint.

The amount of Calvin's preaching is amazing, especially when considered in connection with his other labors. While he held no other official post than that of an interpreter of the Word of God as pastor and teacher, yet was he practically ruler of Geneva. He devoted much time to the governing bodies and to matters of discipline. Virtually he was at the head of the Reformed party in Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, England and Scotland, and by voluminous correspondence gave counsel and direction to the leading representatives of the church and state. His commentaries, which cover almost the entire collection of the Old Testament and New Testament, while largely the outgrowth of his lectures and sermons, consumed many hours of dictational work, day by day, continuously, for many years. In addition to these abundant labors, Calvin devoted a considerable portion of his time to preaching. On Sunday a discourse was given at day-break; at noon the youth were instructed in the catechism prepared for the purpose by Calvin; and service with a sermon was conducted at three o'clock. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday there was further preaching. And before Calvin's

death, a daily sermon had been instituted in each church of the city. It was Calvin's purpose, by such ministrations to make of Geneva a model Christian community. He endeavored to put into operation an effective discipline whereby the church might fulfil its chief duty, namely, the initiation of its members into, and their maintenance in, right doctrine and right living. To this end Calvin ceased not to comfort and exhort; also to preach and deliver his lectures on theology. His two hundred sermons on Deuteronomy were all delivered on week days in little more than a year; and, as shown by the dates attached, they sometimes followed one another on four or five days in succession. His frequent severe headaches did not prevent him from meeting his appointment at the preaching hour. His naturally frail body was almost continuously subjected to disease and suffering. One biographer names no less than nine ailments which "troubled him more or less separately for years, and which seemed to descend upon him during his last year with almost their whole united force." It was with difficulty that his friends dissuaded him to desist from preaching while his spare body was being consumed by the quartan fever. Near the close of his life, when no longer able to walk, he was carried to the familiar pulpit in a chair. Beza reckoned Calvin's sermons at two hundred and eighty-six annually, and his lectures on theology as only one hundred less in number. Besides his public works there are now in the library of Geneva two thousand and twenty-five sermons in manuscript.

His sermons and lectures always commanded a crowded congregation. As many as a thousand hearers attended his lectures and preaching. The liberal extension of the rights of citizenship opened the way for the settlement in Geneva of large bodies of immigrants from foreign countries, from Holland, England, Italy, Spain, and especially from France. They were attracted by the fame and influence of Calvin, eager to hear his messages and to obtain his religious counsel. No man of his time attracted so large a circle of noble and dis-

tinguished names as appeared in the community of foreigners in Geneva in 1553, who were known as devoted adherents of Calvin. Geneva came to be regarded as the normal school of Christian life. "There," it was said, doubtless with exaggerated appreciation, "a pure gospel is preached in every temple and house; there the singing of psalms never ceases; there hands are folded and hearts are raised to the living God day and night; for the greater part of the people are inflamed with the spirit of religion and piety." Farel wrote: "I would rather be last in Geneva than first in other places." John Knox was so impressed by the preaching and teaching of Calvin that he regarded his religious system as "the most perfect school of Christ that ever was on earth since the days of the Apostles."

It has been repeatedly observed that Calvin's speech was without eloquence, as that art is usually known and praised; but this judgment cannot be accepted unqualifiedly in the light of the strong testimony to his irresistible influence as a preacher and public debater. Surely it must be something closely akin to eloquence that enables a speaker to attract and hold hundreds of auditors day after day; to sway and convince the minds of men, even though they be unfavorable to the cause which he pleads. In a disputation on the subject of the Lord's Supper, before an assembly in Lausanne, it is recorded that Calvin argued so convincingly that an opposing friar was converted on the spot. Before the Great Council in Geneva were witnessed some of the most notable achievements of Calvin in public disputation. It was here that he found the most frequent incitements to persuasive oratory, and where he exhibited masterly power as he extemporized with irresistible force. As one of many incidents, his triumph over Perrin may be cited. The majority of the Council of Two Hundred had strongly expressed their sympathy in favor of Calvin's antagonist; but they were constrained to reverse their decision by the convincing arguments and fiery ardor of Calvin. Later on when the conflict with Perrin was renewed, at the peril of

his life, and against protest, warning and threat, Calvin appeared before the Two Hundred, and by the courage of his personal presence and the skill and force of his arguments, wrested what seemed to be foregone defeat into triumph.

For a brief season there was a revulsion in the tide of popular favor, and Calvin was banished from the city of Geneva. But even in his defeat and banishment his leadership was acknowledged. His expulsion was regarded by many as a calamity which was followed by divine judgment; nor could the marshals or the people be satisfied until, by most urgent and persistent pleading, his return from Strassburg was secured. Every voice of the Great Council of Geneva was raised in his favor. "Calvin," they exclaimed, "that righteous and learned man, it is he whom we would have as the minister of the Lord." "Come," was their plea, "thou worthy father in Christ; thou art ours. God has given thee to us. All sigh for thee. Thou must be the watchman of the House of Israel for us." The influence of Calvin's searching and austere mind, wielded by his preaching as well as by his writings, remained impressed upon the manners and habits of the Genevans for ages after his death; and, it is claimed that the stamp is not yet altogether obliterated.

It is eminently fitting that the fame of Calvin as a preacher, should have recognition, and find a suitable place in the series of tributes presented in the present number of the *REFORMED CHURCH REVIEW*. But however high or kind may be one's appreciation of Calvin as a preacher, fairness and honesty cannot deny or conceal the defects which weighed so heavily in the balance in his own age, and which have not been lightened by the lapse of centuries. Faults may be explained and extenuated; but as facts they should not be ignored nor excused. Like other men Calvin was subject to human infirmities. It does not explain them away to ascribe them to physical frailty, to temperament, or to the convenient scapegoat,—the "spirit of the times." Like other strong and commanding personalities, Calvin had the "defects of his

qualities"; but it strains the mantle of charity when it is made to cover those defects with such a lenient apology as was expressed by John von Müller in the statement: "His faults were only the excess of the great virtues that qualified him for his peculiar work." Such exaggerated laudation reflects no credit upon Calvin, and still less upon his eulogist. However Calvin may have come by his faults, he had them; and the shadows which they cast, remain. Dr. Paul Henry in his valuable work, "*The Life and Times of John Calvin*," says regretfully: "Even to the present day, wherever an inclination exists to honor Calvin, Servetus appears as a pale spectre to snatch the crown of honor from his head." That "pale spectre," represents more than an unfortunate incident in the life of Calvin; it discloses traits of character which made possible the Servetus horror.

With his towering intellect, indomitable will, and pre-eminent scholarship; with his many moral and personal qualities which entitle him to respect and admiration, Calvin was fitted above all others of his age for the leadership of men and of nations; but while he was the most influential man of his time, he was the most hated of men of his own and succeeding ages. Not only did he evoke the wrathful opposition of Roman Catholics, but no less was he decried by the Lutherans, as if he were little better than a child of Satan. Within his own church storms of virulent opposition were allayed only for a short period, and continually broke out anew with increased violence. The explanation of the turbulence of which Calvin was the storm-center, is to be found in the temper of the man as well as in the temper of the times. And the qualities of the man which appear so conspicuously in Calvin as a theologian and ecclesiastical disciplinarian, were no less influential in Calvin as a preacher. He knew no other standpoint of doctrine than his own. Strong with the might of conviction, he was intolerant and unbending toward dissenting opinion. With the office of preacher he combined that of the censor of morals, with a sternness and severity which showed



little respect for the principle of individual freedom. Even to his intimate friends he would often express himself with acerbity, while to his enemies he was vindictive and unrelenting. While he was not without intimate friendships, his lack of geniality and good fellowship appears in the fact that "Master Calvin" was the fitting title given to him. Luther had many friends who called him "Brother Martin." He combined with his devout spirit a genial humor which Calvin lacked. He could laugh as well as preach. Bossuet characterized Calvin as "*un génie triste*," which may not be entirely just, for he had his brighter hours and his cheerful moments. As a preacher Calvin failed to move the emotions of the heart, for the reason that his thoughts were forged by his intellect, and were addressed primarily to the intellect. He was well qualified to enact laws as a spiritual legislator and to enforce discipline; he even framed a liturgy in the interests of churchly order, but he could not write a hymn.

Here again the contrast with the great German Reformer may be noted. Calvin has been designated "the intellectual complement of Luther," for the reason that he supplied the regulative and reflective principle to the Reformation which it needed, and that he made up Luther's marked defects. It is true that he outranked all the reformers as a systematizer and organizer, and was by preëminence the people's spiritual ruler and guide; but with all his commanding power he was not the people's preacher, as were Luther and Zwingli. He lacked the sympathy and humanity which they so largely shared and expressed.

Lacking the emotional, even to a greater degree he lacked the artistic. Though his style was classically pure, consistent and exact, it was totally bare of ornament, and unilluminated by any ray of imagination. Nor had he any poetic sympathy with nature. The countless scenic attractions which environ lake Geneva, with Mt. Blanc far remote, yet so near, raising aloft its crown of majestic splendor, seem to have evoked no response from the heart of the great preacher and teacher.

It is difficult to understand how anyone confronted daily for many years by the varied beauties of nature which constitute the charm of Geneva, should fail to give any evidence of their appreciation. It is still less comprehensible that a Frenchman should be so destitute of his national characteristic—the love of the beautiful. It was a profound want in the man, whether viewed as theologian or preacher, which no eulogist can conceal.

Still another note rings dolefully from the voice of the preacher; it is the note that disparages and unduly condemns the nature of man. This is bad enough, but it is not all bad. The sin-cloud has cast a very dark shadow upon man's soul, but it is not all darkness; some light yet remains. So intent was the mind of Calvin upon the evil and the gloom which envelope man as a child of wrath, that he could not recognize any claim of his human nature to the favor of the heavenly Father. The sermon of Calvin, chosen as a model specimen for the recent collection of "*The World's Great Sermons*,"<sup>a</sup> does not fail to sound the note of man's vileness and of God's wrathfulness: "Poor worms of the earth, creatures full of vanity, full of lies. Were God to deal with us according to our desserts, would he not have just cause to chastise us daily in a thousand ways? Nay more, a hundred thousand deaths would not suffice for a small portion of our misdeeds." These are but a few of the echoes from the Genevan pulpit which remind one of the awful thunders of Sinai, in contrast with the more inviting and more cheerful message of that "better covenant" into which we have come in our day. They are referred to in this connection, not for the purpose of raising the controversial question as to the merits or defects of Calvin's theology, but rather to show that his lack of sympathy with human nature and its infirmities, together with a too frequent representation of God as a Judge who uses the rod of chastisement, is a phase of the preaching of Calvin more open to censure than to praise.

<sup>a</sup>Funk & Wagnalls Company.

An unprejudiced spirit has yielded to a sense of fairness and honesty in the brief reference that has been made to the defects which inhered in the character of Calvin, and which undeniably detract from his greatness and fame as a preacher. But whatever may have been the defects of Calvin's theology, or of his personality, yet his commanding power as a preacher may not be questioned. If the greatness of a preacher is to be measured by the extent of his influence upon his own age, and the impress of his thought upon succeeding generations, few names, if any, in the entire history of preaching, can find a place superior to that of John Calvin.

LANCASTER, PA.

## VII.

### CALVIN AND CIVIL LIBERTY.

BY PROF. A. V. HIESTER.

While the Reformation was primarily a theological movement, it influenced most profoundly every department of human thought and action, the social as well as the personal, the political and economic no less than the religious, the moral and the intellectual. Concerned at first only with man's relation to God, it was not until they found their doctrines denied and condemned by the Roman hierarchy that the reformers began to challenge the right of the Church to decide questions of doctrine for the individual; and this in turn led them to a critical examination of the nature and constitution of the Christian Church. The consequences of this examination were: first, the definitive repudiation of the authority of both the Roman See and the general councils of the Church to give final decisions on matters of faith and worship; and, secondly, the setting up of the doctrine that the individual conscience interpreting the Word of God in the Scriptures is the sole rule of Christian faith and practice. Both parties acknowledged the Bible as the supreme source of religious authority. But in the one case it was the Bible as interpreted by each individual for himself; in the other, the Bible as interpreted for the individual by the Church speaking through tradition, the opinions of its teachers, the decrees of its popes and the deliverances of its councils. The result of the Roman principle was that in the course of time the Bible came to be buried under layer after layer of accumulated authoritative interpretation. By the sixteenth century it had become practically a sealed book to the laity requiring a priestly hierarchy to unlock its truths. All this was thoroughly obnoxious to the reformers, and what they did in the final analysis was to set aside this

oppressive system of spiritual middlemen, which had interjected itself, with its traditions and authoritative interpretations, between the Divine Spirit and the human soul; and to assert the right of immediate access of every believing soul to God and its capacity to comprehend the divine message.

But in their efforts to escape from one form of oppression the early reformers only succeeded in subjecting themselves to another. To wage a successful war against Rome they needed, or thought they needed, the active support of the civil authorities; and as early as 1520 Luther was calling upon the Emperor and the nobility to establish the Reformation by means of the temporal power. But the German princes as a rule had little interest in the doctrinal controversies precipitated by the Saxon reformer. They were interested much more in his efforts to overthrow the authority of the Pope, for that promised to enhance their own power and dignity. Their purposes were worldly, not spiritual; and in most cases it was only through the prospect of political and material advantage that their support was enlisted. Wherever the Reformation became an accomplished fact through their assistance they promptly confiscated all the property of the Roman Church situated within their territories. The greater part of such property they usually appropriated to their own use, leaving only an insignificant remnant to be applied under their direction to the support of the new ecclesiastical organizations. And then these new organizations, by virtue of their enforced dependence on the secular governments for their pecuniary support, became more or less dependent in everything. In thus acquiring control over the ecclesiastical organizations the secular governments reversed almost at a blow the relation which had subsisted for more than a thousand years between church and state. Instead of the church ruling the state, as in the medieval period, the state now ruled the church in Protestant lands.

This general tendency in the direction of the complete control of the church by the state was materially strengthened by

another set of circumstances. In setting up the doctrine that the Bible as interpreted by the individual is the sole criterion of Christian faith and practice the reformers wielded a two-edged sword. It cut both ways, as they were soon made to realize. From the very beginning of the Reformation there were those who professed to find in the Bible, in the exercise of the unlimited right of private judgment, doctrines that were subversive of every principle of social order. Against these radicals, who were collectively known as Anabaptists, the reformers felt themselves under the necessity of waging a relentless warfare. They believed that their failure to dissociate themselves from these revolutionary and fanatical elements would not only have the effect of discrediting the Reformation in the eyes of the secular governments, but that it would also open the door to every sort of error and excess, and utterly demoralize the masses. In the interest, therefore, of truth and social order, as well as in the interest of the active support of the secular governments, the reformers were obliged early in their struggle with Rome to set some limit to their most cherished principle of the right of individual judgment, and to repudiate the dangerous beliefs and practices flowing from its abuse at the hands of the Anabaptists. And when repudiation and denunciation failed to accomplish the desired end the reformers appealed to the civil power to suppress all revolutionary opinions and practices by force. The princes were only too ready to undertake such a commission, for their interests were identical with those of the reformers. The inevitable consequence of this, again, was to magnify the power and dignity of the secular rulers. Nothing, indeed, could have been more conducive to a growing control of the ecclesiastical organizations by the secular governments than this constant interference in matters of religion by the princes at the urgent solicitation of the reformers themselves.

Still another condition favoring the growing authority of the secular governments in religious and ecclesiastical affairs was the rise of national states. During the medieval period

the glamour of the Roman principle of universal rule, in church and state, held the whole of Europe as under a spell. With the breaking of this spell and the beginnings of national states the world entered upon the modern period of its history. At first these national states were weak and both Pope and Emperor succeeded for a time in maintaining their supremacy over them. But the spirit of nationalism gradually developed strong national states, the effect of which was to magnify the royal power at the expense both of Pope and Emperor above and of feudal institutions below. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the royal power had increased most rapidly in England, France and Spain; and during the next two centuries it succeeded in attaining unchecked supremacy everywhere except in England. The general imitation of the more important civil rulers by the lesser ones made absolutism almost the universal rule in secular government. While this growth in political absolutism was unquestionably harmful in some ways, it is altogether probable that owing to the ignorance of the masses the creation of strong national states, the distinctive contribution of modern times to political progress, and, indeed, the only form of state compatible with individual liberty, would have been impossible, in the first place, without the sacrifice of the principle of self-government.

A fourth condition conducive to the subjection of the church to the state was the substitution of the civil law for canon law in the sixteenth century. The true text of the old Roman Civil Code, discovered by the scholarship of the Renaissance, had taught the lawyers and statesmen of Europe a conception of the relation of church and state that differed widely from the medieval principle. Instead of subjecting the state to the church, as Hildebrand's doctrine did, these old Roman codes made the church merely a department of the state; and one consequence of this substitution of the civil law for canon law was that the secular governments were able to oppose all claims for the independence of the church on legal and philosophic grounds.



Several conditions of minor importance need only be named. The early reformers, both German and Swiss, were too much engrossed in the doctrinal issues of the Reformation to concern themselves with questions of organization and discipline. They also lacked talent for organization and were quite willing to surrender the task into more experienced and capable hands. Finally, they regarded the masses as too rough and turbulent for self-government in ecclesiastical affairs.

The joint effect of these several conditions was that the ecclesiastical organizations in the first years of the Reformation were everywhere remodeled and absolutely controlled by the civil authority. The early reformers hoped that this state of affairs, to which they had been forced by the logic of events, would prove only temporary. But in this they were mistaken, for a state-controlled church not only became the general rule in the Protestant lands of Europe, in most cases the arrangement has also proved a permanent one. It may be said, then, that the immediate political effect of the Reformation, owing to the peculiar conditions which confronted the reformers, was to promote political absolutism. This it did, first, by extending the authority of the secular governments over the church, from which domain they had been excluded before; and, secondly, by breaking down the only power that had demonstrated its ability to put a check upon the secular power, that is, the papacy.

The conditions of the time are more or less clearly reflected in the political philosophy of the Reformation. Luther does not appear to have entered upon his career of reform with any clearly defined ideas respecting the origin, nature and ends of the state. His views were largely determined by the exigencies of the moment. Thus he held the doctrine of the divine character of secular government, which is substantially identical with the medieval dogma of the two powers, but which had been greatly obscured during the later medieval period through the exaggeration of ecclesiastical power. Governments being sanctioned by God, it follows that

they must be obeyed by Christians. To this Christian duty of obedience to government Luther permitted two exceptions. When a government commands what is contrary to the law of God, or when it attempts to regulate purely spiritual matters, the Christian is under no obligation to obey. But both the general principle and exceptions broke down in practice. To leave to each individual the right to determine whether the thing commanded by the government was right or wrong was only to invite anarchy; while to leave the matter of interpretation in the hands of the government was to render the exception absolutely worthless. The other exception broke down during the peasant uprisings in western Germany, when Luther was obliged to recognize the opposite principle that the civil authorities must inevitably fix a limit of toleration for heretical beliefs, and suppress them by force when they go beyond that limit. Later he gave up even the general principle. This happened when the rupture came between the Emperor and the Protestant princes, and when he was obliged by the logic of events to admit that even in purely temporal matters the Christian may be justified in resisting an established government.

Melanchthon was even more of an opportunist in political matters than Luther. His political doctrines in general he based on the concept of natural right, *jus natura*, which he derived, first, from the commands of God, and, secondly, from right reasoning about the nature of man. To one or both of these sources all legitimate political institutions are traceable. According to this principle civil government finds its main justification in the Scriptural injunction of obedience to rulers. This injunction Melanchthon interprets with such literalness as to teach that not even impious rulers may be rejected or resisted. He modifies this, however, under the stress of circumstances to the extent of justifying tyrannicide when there is notorious and indisputable oppression; and frequently, too, the theoretical duty of subjects to obey their rulers is made to depend altogether on the more

practical question of the religious complexion of ruler and subject.

The political views of Zwingli do not differ materially from those of Luther and Melanchthon. Like them he held the abstract principle of passive obedience to government; like them, too, he freely modified it according to circumstances. In admitting that any other than a Christian government may be overthrown by the people, peaceably if possible, he went perhaps a step beyond both Luther and Melanchthon in the direction of political opportunism. The political differences between Zwingli and his German contemporaries were of minor importance and directly attributable to the differences between the political institutions of the aristocratic Swiss cantons and those of the monarchical states of North Germany.

Calvin differs from the earlier reformers mainly in this that he applied the Biblical test to matters of religious faith and practice with greater rigor and consistency than they had done. In applying the cardinal principle of the Reformation of conforming everything to the plain teachings of the Scriptures he was governed less by expediency; and consequently the churches which he founded contained in less degree elements foreign to the New Testament than the Protestant churches of Germany and German Switzerland. He appears to have chosen his various positions with greater care and truer insight, and to have held them when once chosen with greater tenacity. His earlier and later views on most questions are substantially identical. So wide was the sweep of his intellect, so clear his vision, so true his logic, that he rarely found occasion to amend his views. "The doctrine which he held at first," declares Beza, "he held to the last. He varied in nothing, a thing which can be said of few theologians." Schaff writes in similar vein: "Calvin did not grow before the public like Luther and Melanchthon, who passed through many doctrinal changes and contradictions. He adhered to the religious views of his youth unto the end of his life. His 'Institutes' came like Minerva in full panoply out of the head of Jupiter."

Again, if Calvin's general principles be compared with their practical applications, it will be seen that he exhibits in less degree than the earlier reformers a disposition to compromise with circumstances. This is owing in part to his genius for organization; partly also to the circumstance that he moved on a smaller stage than Luther, Melancthon and even Zwingli, and was therefore able to fill and dominate his environment as they could not have filled theirs even with his organizing talents; but most of all is it owing to Calvin's masterful personality, his majesty of character, his powerful intellect, his practical wisdom, his iron will.

Calvin's views on civil government are most fully worked out in his final revision of the "Institutes," published in 1559, five years before his death. It is to be kept in mind, however, in any study of his political influence that his political doctrines were only by-products. He was not consciously or intentionally a political reformer. His interests were overwhelmingly religious, and whatever influence he has had on the development of civil liberty has been indirect.

In the last chapter of the "Institutes" Calvin discusses at length and with consummate ability the nature and function of civil government. With respect to the abstract question of the comparative excellence of the several forms of government he expresses no very positive opinion. He rightly maintains that no one form is absolutely best, that political institutions and arrangements vary in excellence with times and places, that all are good in so far as they conform to the requirements of equity, and that all are compatible with Christianity. Each has its dangers as well as its excellences. "Monarchy," he says, "is prone to tyranny. In an aristocracy, again, the tendency is not less to the faction of a few, while in popular ascendancy there is the strongest tendency to sedition." On the whole, however, Calvin prefers either an aristocratic form of government or an aristocracy tempered with democracy. Either is safer than monarchy, for if the government is in

the hands of many rather than of one the many may afford each other assistance and restrain arrogance and ambition.

To this preference for an aristocratic form of government, which was based on the teachings of profane history, three other factors largely contributed. The first was the fact that God gave to his chosen people an aristocratic government. For one so thoroughly impregnated with the spirit of the Old Testament as Calvin was this must have had no little significance. In the second place, Calvin was by instinct and education an aristocrat. He lived in the realm of the intellect. He was more at home among cold abstractions than among the warm heart throbs of the common people. In his earliest writing, the *Commentary on Seneca*, there is an expression of contempt for the populace; and nowhere in his writings is there the slightest trace of the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people. The third factor was Calvin's experience at Geneva. What he saw there in the first years after his recall was little calculated to inculcate democratic principles. It served rather to strengthen his aristocratic inclinations; and it was not until after his final triumph over his enemies, when his opponents had been destroyed or driven from the city, and when a new generation had grown up under his system, that he began to introduce a larger measure of popular rule in church and state.

Like the earlier reformers Calvin adopted the principle of absolute obedience to government which he did not shrink from following to its most remote consequences. He lays down the general proposition, which he establishes by numerous citations from the Scriptures, that civil government is ordained and sanctioned by God, and that to resist civil rulers is to set at naught the law of God. It is the fact of a divine sanction, not the character of the ruler, that determines, according to Calvin, the duty of obedience. Even the worst character when invested with public authority must be obeyed by the Christian. "If we have respect to the Word of God," he says, "it will lead us farther and make us subject, not only

to the authority of those princes who honestly and faithfully perform their duty toward us, but all princes by whatever means they have so become, although there is nothing they less perform than the duties of princes."

Calvin makes a distinction between passive disobedience and active resistance to government. For the latter he has only unqualified condemnation. Under no circumstances, he argues, is organized and active resistance to be justified; for the punishment of evil rulers belongs to God alone, not to men, who can only obey and pray for such rulers, and endure in patience and humility until God exercises his judgment. "It behooves us," he declares, "to take the greatest possible care lest we despise or violate the authority of the magistrates, which is so full of venerable majesty, and which God hath sanctified by the gravest edicts, even though it should be vested in the most unworthy, and in those who do all they can to pollute it by their wickedness. Nor, because the vengeance of the Lord is the correction of unbridled tyranny, let us thence hastily conclude it to be entrusted to ourselves, to whom no other command is given than to obey and suffer."

The question of the rightfulness of resisting persecution by force was presented to Calvin in a very concrete form by the course of events in France. In the earlier persecutions the French Protestants, largely by Calvin's advice, had submitted meekly without thought of revolt. But later, with a growing consciousness of strength and the mixing of political aims with religious considerations, they began to entertain the project of an armed insurrection to arrest persecution. When the scheme was broached to Calvin, during the oppressive rule of the Guises and the minority of Francis II., he vehemently denounced it. "If one drop of blood is shed in such a revolt," he replied, "rivers will flow; it is better that we all perish than cause such a scandal to the cause of Christ and his Evangel." But his advice was disregarded and the result was the abortive conspiracy of Amboise. In similar strain Calvin wrote to the Protestants at Aix that as soon as

they used force against force they would thereby put away God's hand and help from themselves. He admonished them to leave it to God to avenge them, and support themselves on his promises to protect his people against the rage of the wicked. So far, indeed, did Calvin carry this doctrine of the wrongfulness of active resistance, that he advised persecuted believers to contend only by prayer and receive martyrdom as a grace from the hand of God, rather than attempt to escape from prison, whether by force or bribery or by means of keys surreptitiously obtained. He also held that Christian freedom is perfectly compatible with political servitude.

While active resistance is never justifiable, passive obedience is, under one condition. When a ruler commands that which is contrary to the law of God the Christian is absolved from obedience. In that case he must obey God rather than man. "We are subjects," he says, "to the men who rule over us, but subject only in the Lord. If they command anything against him, let us not pay the least regard to it, nor be moved by all the dignity which they possess as magistrates." But this is never applicable to active resistance. It does not give to the Christian the right to engage in sedition or rebellion when his sovereign's commands contravene the law of God. Sedition and rebellion are nowhere sanctioned by Calvin. The most that the Christian can do is to disobey and passively suffer the penalty.

In all this there is little to favor civil liberty. Indeed, if the right accorded to the Christian to disobey when his sovereign's commands contravene the law of God be excepted, Calvin's views on civil government are those of a thorough-going absolutist. While they were not inconsistent with his character and purposes, it is altogether probable that under other circumstances, particularly in the early part of his career when his views were formed, he would have spoken in more moderate fashion. There is little room to doubt that his extreme views with respect to the sanctity and authority of civil government were colored by the fanatical contempt of



government, which was manifested by the Anabaptists, and which brought upon the Reformation so much odium and suspicion. That Calvin was influenced by this is evident from the first edition of the "Institutes" which he dedicated to Francis I. In his celebrated letter, which forms the preface of the book, and which was addressed to the King who was then persecuting his Protestant subjects, Calvin explains that he was moved to write the book by two distinct purposes: first, to prepare students of theology for reading the divine Word; and, secondly, to vindicate the teachings of the reformers against the calumnies of their enemies, who had incited the King against the Reformation on the ground that it was a factious and seditious movement aimed at the subversion of all government.

The only redeeming feature of Calvin's purely political views from the standpoint of civil liberty was the exception which he permitted to the rule of absolute submission to civil government. That proved of far-reaching importance. For in the nature of the case the question whether a command of prince or king is contrary to the law of God must be decided by every thinking man for himself. Just as the Reformation placed the Bible in the hands of the individual, and bade him read and interpret it for himself, just as the Renaissance emancipated his intellect, so Calvin's principle that the law of God is superior to the commands of men emancipated him from political bondage. It is true Calvin did not himself recognize all the possibilities legitimately involved in this doctrine. But the inevitable consequence of his principle was to make men question the rightfulness of human statutes and institutions, and to demand some other sanction for obnoxious laws than the arbitrary will of kings and princes.

But the full import of Calvin's influence on the development of civil liberty cannot be gathered from his purely political teachings. It is rather in his views on the constitution and government of the church, and its relation to the state, that his most fruitful contributions to the cause of civil liberty

are to be found. The question of the relation of church and state is one that has vexed the Christian Church all through its history. It is not an easy task at best to draw a clear line of demarcation between two social interests so inextricably interwoven as religion and government. But in the sixteenth century such untoward conditions as the dream of universal empire in church and state, the universal rule of intolerance in religious matters, the corrupt state of the church, the rapacity of the civil rulers, and the ignorance of the masses, rendered the task infinitely more difficult. In modern times the problem of the relation of church and state has found its solution in the principle of a free church in a free state. But in the sixteenth century that principle was unknown. No one had yet dreamed of the possibility of the secular and ecclesiastical powers living peaceably together, each sovereign in its particular sphere, and neither interfering with the other. To prevent incessant strife between them there appeared to be no other alternative than to unite them in one common organization or subject the one to the other. Islamism and early Judaism chose the former. In ancient Greece and Rome, on the other hand, religion was controlled absolutely by the state. In its early history the Christian Church claimed dominion only in purely spiritual concerns. This is seen in the patristic writings which constantly inculcate the duty of obedience to the state in temporal matters. But as the Roman See increased in power and importance it claimed and exercised other than spiritual functions. This continued through a long process of growth until it had succeeded in acquiring a more or less absolute supremacy over the secular governments. And what was once accomplished in fact had not long to wait to be justified in theory. The medieval theory of the relation of church and state is thus stated by Aquinas: "The highest aim of mankind is eternal blessedness. To this chief aim all earthly aims must be subordinated. The chief aim cannot be realized through human direction alone but must obtain divine assistance, which is

only to be obtained through the church. Therefore the state through which earthly aims are attained must be subordinated to the church. Church and state are as of two swords which God has given to Christendom for its protection. Both of these, however, are given by Him to the Pope and the temporal sword by him handed to the rulers of the states. Thus the Pope alone received his power directly from the Almighty, the Emperor his indirectly through the Pope's hands."

In marked contrast to this the reformers held at first in theory that church and state are so far distinct that they cannot be merged into one, and that neither is subject to the other. Thus Luther regarded the church as the repository of ecclesiastical authority and claimed for it the power of the keys. The Augsburg Confession similarly restricted the jurisdiction of civil rulers to temporal concerns. But Luther was not able to put his theories into practice. After the Diet of Speier in 1526 the German princes who had adopted Protestantism everywhere assumed episcopal supervision and control over the churches in their respective territories. Under the stress of circumstances Luther and Melancthon yielded to the secular rulers more and more authority in matters of religion, including the authority to punish offenses against the first table of the Law. While they realized their helplessness they clearly foresaw and lived to deplore the evil effects of the arbitrary power exercised over the church by the princes. Their fears were abundantly realized under the Peace of Augsburg which subjected the religion of each community to the absolute control of its prince. Under this system all ecclesiastical power was from above. The church had no autonomy whatsoever. The congregation was not even permitted to choose its own pastors, although it generally possessed the nominal right of confirming or rejecting nominations made by the prince through his administrative agencies, the consistories and superintendents.

The reformers of German Switzerland conceded somewhat more power to the people in ecclesiastical affairs, for the

Swiss were more familiar with republican institutions than the people of North Germany. At Zürich the supreme authority was vested in the Great Council which nominated pastors to the congregations, as the princes did in Lutheran communities; exercised the function of excommunication; and punished all offenses against the Word of God, although Zwingli had at first rejected the principle of coercion in matters of religion. Unlike Luther, Zwingli insisted on the democratic principle of the parity of the clergy, and on the still more democratic principle of a limited equality between clergy and laity. Zwingli was also the first among the reformers to organize a synodical church government. To superintend the doctrine and morals of the clergy and legislate on the internal affairs of the church, he established a synod composed of all the ministers of the canton, two lay delegates from every parish, four members of the Small Council and four of the Great Council. The chief features of the Zürich polity were adopted at Bern and Basel. At the latter place Ecolampadius attempted to introduce the principle of ecclesiastical autonomy by vesting the right to exercise discipline, including the power of excommunication, in the congregation. But all his colleagues as well as Zwingli refused to recognize the principle, claiming that the church was sufficiently protected by a government composed of faithful men.

In England the Reformation took the same course as in Germany and German Switzerland with respect to the relation of church and state. In fact the only immediate effect of the English Reformation was to substitute Henry VIII. for the Pope as the head of the Anglican establishment, and to vest the supreme authority in ecclesiastical affairs in the civil government. Nothing else was changed.

Calvin was the first—if the unsuccessful attempt of Ecolampadius at Basel be disregarded—to make a clear distinction between the spiritual and secular powers, and to maintain it in practice as well as in theory. He differed on the one hand from Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli and the

Anglican reformers, all of whom subordinated the church to the state; and on the other, from Catholicism which subjected the state to the church. Rejecting the principle of the supremacy of either over the other, Calvin asserted the supremacy of Christ over both. While each has its peculiar mission and is sovereign in its own sphere, church and state are bound together in a relation of friendly coöperation, on the basis of perfect equality, for a common end, and that end the realization of the kingdom of God on earth. The church's part in the attainment of this end is to teach pure doctrine, appoint pastors and ordain ministers, regulate church ordinances and forms of worship, and promote morality and religion in the state. Having to do only with the spiritual and eternal welfare of man, all worldly affairs are excluded from its control. The office of the civil government is not only to promote tranquillity and humanity, but also "to cherish and support the external worship of God, to preserve the true doctrine of religion, to defend the true constitution of the church," and see to it "that no idolatry, no blasphemy against the name of God, no columnies against his truth, nor other offenses to religion, break out and be disseminated among the people." But this duty of the civil government to maintain God's glory unimpaired, and to preserve the honor of divine truth, is not an exclusive power of the state, but only supplementary to that of the church. For the church in guarding its own purity and the honor of God cannot go further than the penalty of excommunication. To that extent it is absolutely independent of secular control. But there are offenses against religion such as idolatry, blasphemy and flagrant heresy, for which the penalty of excommunication is clearly inadequate. The enormity of such offenses requires civil penalties over and above those lying within the jurisdiction of the church. The distinction, then, between Calvin and the early reformers is that they subjected the whole domain of ecclesiastical government and discipline to the absolute power of the state, whereas he claimed for the church a certain autonomy founded

on a holy authority given it by God and embracing the power of the keys.

Emanipated in this way from the control of the secular power in purely spiritual concerns, Calvin's church was necessarily referred to itself for its organization, government and discipline. While his theory of the relation of church and state resembled the traditional view of the Roman Church, since both denied to the state the right to interfere with the church in spiritual matters, and since in both the state was made to lend its power to the church as the executioner of ecclesiastical laws, the two theories differed widely with respect to the internal government of the church. In Calvin's polity the ultimate source of authority was the general body of believers; and all power was, therefore, from below. The basis of the church was for Calvin the Christian man. He was the sovereign to whom pastors and elders were alike responsible. Every group of such men was a church, self-governing, independent of all save God, supreme in its authority over its own spiritual and ecclesiastical concerns. The constitution of such a church necessarily took something of a democratic form. Some of the democratic features of the polity which Calvin laid down in the "Institutes" are the election of pastors and other officials, as elders and deacons, by the congregation; the exercise of discipline by officials responsible to the congregation; the parity of the clergy; and the parity of clergy and laity in government and discipline.

In recognizing the principle of self-government in ecclesiastical affairs Calvin boldly challenged the universal practice of his time. In the Roman Church all power was from above through a divinely-constituted hierarchy of pope, cardinal, archbishop, bishop and priest. The Pope was the ultimate source of authority and required implicit obedience from clergy and laity alike. Clergy and laity were distinct orders, the latter being passive in the ecclesiastical administration. In Germany, German Switzerland and England all ecclesiastical power was from above, too, that is, from the civil

government. While the laity were conceded more power than in the Roman Church, the preponderance of the secular power in ecclesiastical affairs rendered the concession of little practical value. For all lay-power rested on the authority of the state, not the sovereignty of the Christian man; and if the laity had more power and influence in the church in German Switzerland than in Germany and England, it was only because they had more power and influence in the state.

In marked contrast to all this Calvin admitted the laity into the various governing bodies of the church, as the representatives of the membership, on equal terms with the clergy, and thus swept away the long-standing barriers between clergy and laity. While Luther first proclaimed the doctrine of the general priesthood of the laity, it was Calvin who first applied it in a systematic way by making the laity a regular agency in the local congregation, as well as in the synods and councils of the church at large. Then as to the parity of the clergy as distinct from a *jure divino* hierarchy, whether papal or prelatical, Calvin maintained the principle of the original identity of bishops and presbyters, in which, says Schaff, he has the support of the best modern exegetes and historians. On this point, however, he did not differ so sharply from the early reformers. For Zwingli also held the doctrine of the parity of the clergy, and Calvin himself did not push it to the point of rejecting all distinctions which rest on human right and historic development, and denying the right of the church to adapt itself to varying conditions and circumstances.

While Calvin's polity was republican in its general character it carefully avoided the dangers of mob rule. Though recognizing the principle of the sovereignty of the Christian man, it did not vest the power of excommunication directly in the congregation, but in the representatives of the congregation acting in its presence, and with its knowledge and approval; so that the body of the people, without regulating the procedure, might as witnesses and guardians observe it and prevent the few from doing anything capriciously. Similarly,



in the election of pastors, Calvin provided that while ministers should be elected by the people, other pastors ought to preside over the election to avoid any error either through levity or bad passion or tumult.

Next to its autonomous and republican character the most significant feature of Calvin's polity was its discipline. Stahl says that Calvin introduced a new principle into Protestantism, namely, the glorification of God by the full dominion of his Word in the life of Christendom. The full significance of this principle can be realized only in view of the fact that it was proclaimed and also enforced at a time when Protestant liberty was in danger of degenerating into license. In marked contrast to Luther, who thought that the faithful preaching of the Gospel would in time bring about a reformation of morals, Calvin taught that discipline is one of the great gifts entrusted to the church for the training of its members. "No society," he says, "no house, can be preserved in proper condition without discipline. The church ought to be the most orderly society of all. As the saving doctrine of Christ is the soul of the church, so discipline forms the nerves and ligaments which connect the members and keep each in its proper place."

In claiming for the church an independent exercise of discipline Calvin revived the medieval theory. While he agreed with the medieval church in making the Christian life dependent on the training and repressive power of the church, he differed from it in this that he made the basis of his discipline and the rule of its application to be, not the wisdom of the church, as in the medieval system, but the Word of God. From another point of view Calvin's disciplinary system was a return to the practice of the early church. Among the reformers Calvin was distinguished for his zeal to restore the conditions of primitive Christianity. He had given to the patristic writings a more diligent study than any of his contemporaries, and he was impressed, as they were not, by the zeal of the early church to protect the sacredness of the Lord's Supper, the center of her life and the crown of her worship,

by guarding against the approach of unworthy communicants. Discipline was the nerve of the early church and excommunication the nerve of discipline. Hence to the two customary Protestant tests of a church—the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments—Calvin added Christian living as a third, to be enforced through the discipline prescribed in the Word of God and practiced in the early church.

Calvin's doctrine of the organization and constitution of the church, and its relation to the state, is the most original thing in the "*Institutes*"; it is at the same time his most fruitful contribution to the development of civil liberty. In the first place, by steering a middle course between submission to the authority of the papal chair and the anarchy which follows in the wake of rationalism and individualism, Calvin alone of the reformers succeeded in throwing off one tyranny without putting another in its place. The church which he established was independent of the papal authority but not anarchical. It understood the difference between liberty and license. It was no stranger to law and authority, for Calvin's conception of the supreme duty of man to know and do the will of God, not, indeed, in order to salvation, but as the only fitting tribute to the honor of God, demanded a discipline of extraordinary severity. In giving to the world this new principle of a strenuous morality Calvin rendered a signal service to civil liberty. For his discipline infused into those who came under its influence that moral poise and power, that capacity for organization, and that practical efficiency, without which self-government cannot hope to endure. Besides developing in the individual the power of self-control Calvin's disciplinary system also exercised a leveling influence on worldly rank, for it recognized no distinctions of persons or station and subjected all classes to the same moral standards. The old glamour and veneration attaching to rank and wealth could not long endure when once pastors and elders, responsible to the people, "by the Word of the Lord might constrain

all the glory and rank of the world to obey his majesty and by that Word govern all from the highest to the lowest."

In vindicating the right of the church to perform its own functions unhindered by the state Calvin taught men to defend their rights against the tyranny of civil rulers; and by introducing the principle of republicanism into the internal government of the church he planted at the same time the seeds of republican institutions in the state. He thus made the church the nursery of civil liberty. For it is inconceivable that men should be shielded from political absolutism in one thing and not desire the same privilege in another; impossible that men should long hold one theory in ecclesiastical and another in civil government. The tendency of human nature is to think the same in one relation of life as in another. Why then, if ecclesiastical rulers are responsible to the people over whom they are placed, should not kings and magistrates be held responsible too? This was the great question that came to be asked wherever Calvinism succeeded in obtaining a foothold. And it was no accident that political tyranny was arrested in Holland, Scotland, England and America, and the foundations of modern constitutional government laid, by men bred in the doctrine and discipline of Calvin. In France, too, though it did not prove strong enough to put a permanent check on the despotic power of the crown, Calvinism nevertheless long kept back the rising tide of absolutism which finally engulfed the country in the reign of Louis XIV.

With respect to religious liberty the influence of Calvin was less wholesome. For the inevitable effect of placing in the hands of a friendly government the power of coercion in religion, to be exercised at the bidding of a church still governed by the medieval idea that there can be only one form of religion and one form of worship in a community, is religious intolerance. This was the immediate consequence of Calvinism both at Geneva and in the theocratic commonwealths of New England. Both were based on the assump-

tion that the Old Testament theocratic view was still applicable to civil society, that through civil laws the honor of God was to be protected as much as the property and lives of men, and that offenses against religion were to be punished by the same penalties as crimes against the state.

The normal effect of this principle may be seen in Calvin himself. In a letter to the Duke of Somerset in 1548 he strongly recommended the repression of the Papists and Anabaptists by the sword. Six years later, in his celebrated tract justifying the burning of Servetus, Calvin boldly maintained the wisdom and rightfulness of extirpating heresy by physical penalties. But lest he might appear to justify the Catholic persecutions he modified this by saying that the punishment of heretics belongs, not to all, but only to those who hold the true doctrine. "Whoever," he says, "shall now contend that it is unjust to put heretics and blasphemers to death will knowingly and willingly incur their very guilt. This is not laid down on human authority; it is God himself who speaks and prescribes a perpetual rule for his church. It is not in vain that he banishes those human affections which soften our hearts. . . . in a word, that he almost deprives men of their nature in order that nothing may hinder their holy zeal. Why is so implacable a severity exacted, but that we may know that God is defrauded of his honor, unless the piety that is due to him be preferred to all human duties; and that when his glory is to be asserted humanity must be obliterated from our memories." In this attempt at his own vindication nearly all his arguments are drawn from the Jewish laws against idolatry and blasphemy, and from the examples of the pious kings of Israel. The entire defense stands or falls with his theory of the relation of church and state and the binding character of the Mosaic code.

All this is in marked contrast to Calvin's earlier views. In the earlier editions of the "*Institutes*" he frequently exhibited a mild and tolerant spirit. Particularly in the Strasburg edition (1539) there were numerous passages advocating

the mild treatment of heretics which were omitted or materially modified in later editions. The following passage will serve as an illustration of Calvin's earlier views: "Wherefore, though it be not lawful on account of ecclesiastical discipline to live familiarly with excommunicated persons, yet we should strive by all possible means, by exhortation and teaching, by clemency and kindness, and by our own prayers to God, that they may be converted to better thoughts and return to the bosom of the church. Nor are these only to be so treated, but also Turks and Saracens, and the rest of the enemies of true religion. So little to be approved of are the methods by which many have hitherto endeavored to drive them to our faith by interdicting them from fire and water and the other elements, by denying them the common offices of humanity."

With respect to the question of religious liberty it must be said, therefore, that Calvin simply left it as he found it. In holding the principle that a community should have but one religion and use force to suppress open dissent he was only the child of his age, neither in advance of it nor yet behind it. And when this was combined with the principle of vesting in the state the power to punish offenses against religion Calvinism became no less hostile to religious liberty than the medieval church had been. It was only where Calvinism found itself in opposition to the civil government, or where the modern doctrine of the limited function of the state took root, that the principle of ecclesiastical autonomy laid down by Calvin became favorable to religious toleration; for the state either would not or could not then lend its power to the church as the executioner of its laws and judgments.

Besides his political doctrines, and his theory of the nature and constitution of the church and its relation to the state, Calvin's theological teachings had an important bearing on civil liberty. Of first importance is his doctrine of the sovereignty of God, which is the all-pervading principle of his theological system, and which taught that in comparison with the almighty Ruler of the universe, whose sovereignty extends over

all persons and events, and whose will is the ground of all that exists, all earthly potentates sink into insignificance. The effect of the intense spirituality which this doctrine inculcated was highly favorable to civil liberty, for it strongly tended to dissipate the halo attaching to worldly station and to dim the luster of all earthly grandeur.

At the same time that Calvin magnified God he also exalted man. By dispensing with a human priesthood, which had interjected itself between God and man, he brought the individual face to face with God. It was Calvin who in his doctrine that salvation rests on a personal relation of each man to God first revealed the worth and dignity of man, and gave to the individualistic spirit of the Reformation its fullest and most logical expression. The worth of the individual was still further enhanced by the doctrine of election; for the consciousness that God had a plan of salvation for each one from all eternity, and that nothing could frustrate the divine purpose in his behalf, was not only a tremendous moral support in times of persecution, but also a powerful and universal solvent of earthly distinctions, since it made the humblest equal in the God-appointed ordering of the universe to the greatest.

The leading doctrines of Calvin, political, ecclesiastical and theological, bearing on civil liberty having been examined, it remains yet to consider their practical application at Geneva and elsewhere.

Geneva had been a town of some importance under Roman rule. Adopting Christianity in the fourth century it became the seat of a bishopric; and at the downfall of the Roman Empire it was made the capitol of the newly established kingdom of Burgundy. After varying political fortune it was united to the German Empire in the tenth century as an "imperial city." While under the overlordship of the Emperor the administration of its temporal affairs was divided among three distinct powers: the Bishop of Geneva, the so-called Count of Geneva, and the citizens. This triangular

arrangement was not ordinarily a peaceful one, and the consequence was a frequent readjustment of powers. In the thirteenth century the bishops succeeded with the assistance of the rising and ambitious House of Savoy in breaking the power of the counts. A subsequent alliance between the House of Savoy, which had assumed the powers of the counts, and the citizens wrested from the bishops a number of privileges for the people and for Savoy the right to appoint the *vice-dominus* or episcopal deputy for temporal administration. A century later the citizens succeeded in extorting from the Bishop a charter which formally recognized their privileges. In accordance with this charter the citizens met annually in a general assembly for the election of four syndics or magistrates and a treasurer to be their representatives in the government of the city. These five together with the four syndics of the previous year—the syndics were not immediately eligible to reëlection—and sixteen others appointed by the syndics formed the Little Council, the inner executive body in that part of the administration which belonged to the citizens. A second council of fifty, later sixty, was established in 1457 to discuss matters not conveniently debatable in the General Assembly. Its members were appointed by the Little Council, not by the general body of citizens. To these two councils a third was added in 1526—the Council of Two Hundred—in conformity to the constitution of Bern and other Swiss cantons.

The *status quo* between the Bishop, the Duke of Savoy and the citizens was again violently disturbed in the fifteenth century when Amadeus VIII. of Savoy while Pope possessed himself of the bishopric of Geneva; thereafter it was almost invariably occupied by a member of the House of Savoy. But this did not satisfy Savoy whose dukes had long entertained the design of extending their control over Geneva. Nearly a century later in pursuance of this scheme Duke Charles induced Bishop John of Savoy to cede to the House of Savoy all his temporal rights. When the citizens refused their approval to the arrangement Charles inaugurated a



bloody persecution. To protect themselves the Genevese entered into an alliance with the cantons of Fribourg and Bern in 1526. The aggressions of Savoy continuing, both cantons finally took the field and compelled Savoy to sue for peace and renounce all its claims on Geneva. A little later, by renouncing all allegiance to the Bishops, and assuming all the rights formerly enjoyed by both Bishop and Duke, Geneva became a self-governing republic under the protection of Bern and the Swiss Confederacy.

At the time Geneva achieved her independence there was little or no sentiment favorable to the Reformation; and the final establishment of Protestantism was largely owing to two factors, neither of them religious in character. The first was the zeal of Bern, Geneva's warm ally, to accomplish the triumph of Protestantism throughout western Switzerland. With Bernese encouragement and under Bernese protection preachers of the new doctrine travelled over the French-speaking parts of Switzerland. It was in this way that the fiery Farel came to Geneva in 1532. The other factor was the profligate and tyrannical conduct of the Bishop of Geneva who had entered into an alliance with Savoy to recover his temporal authority. The effect of this was to identify Protestantism with political liberty in the minds of the people; so that the Reformation was largely a political movement. There was little religious conviction on the part of the people, notwithstanding the fact that stirred by Farel's bold preaching they had voted "to live in this holy evangelical law and Word of God, as it had been announced to them, desiring to abandon all masses, images, idols and all that which may pertain thereto." Nor was the Reformation followed by any moral improvement. Geneva was an important commercial and manufacturing town. Situated near the most frequented passes over the Alps it became early in its history a center of trade where the products of France, Germany and Italy were exchanged. It had, therefore, the vices of a commercial town. Its inhabitants were cosmopolitan in blood and

character; gay, excitable, riotous, luxurious and pleasure-loving; fond of masquerades and other mummeries; given to gambling, dancing, adultery and prostitution, the last sanctioned by the government. The introduction of scandalous licentiousness by the Savoyan courtiers had infected the entire population with a moral virus. To this must be added yet the moral decay caused by the thirty years' struggle for independence, the sudden destruction of the old order, political and religious, and the unchaining of the passions through constant tumult. Finally, the city was torn with factions. A considerable element including many of the oldest families still held to Catholicism. On the other hand, many who had been aroused by Farel's preaching, and others who had embraced Protestantism out of patriotic considerations, did not take kindly to the strenuous discipline established by Farel. The consequence was a growing spirit of discontent with the new order of things, and a growing clamor for the ancient customs and liberties. Such was the Geneva to which Calvin came.

When Calvin was recalled to Geneva in 1541 he came on his own terms. The main thing on which he insisted was the principle of ecclesiastical independence in the matter of government and discipline, the very thing for which he had unsuccessfully contended, and because of which he had been expelled from the city three years before. This point tacitly agreed to, Calvin lost no time after his return in applying himself to the task of ecclesiastical and political organization. On the very day of his return he petitioned the Little Council to appoint a commission to draw up a constitution for the Genevan church. Six councillors were promptly appointed in conjunction with the ministers, and in two weeks they reported the celebrated "*Ordonnances ecclésiastiques de l'Eglise de Genève*" which were almost entirely the work of Calvin. After some alterations at the hands of the several councils they were solemnly ratified by the General Assembly of citizens, January 2, 1542, as the fundamental law of the republic.

In accordance with the "Institutes" the Ordinances recognized four classes of officers: pastors, teachers, elders and deacons. The duty of the pastor was to preach, administer the sacraments and exercise discipline in conjunction with the elders. For purposes of discipline the city was divided into districts; and in each district a pastor and an elder were required to make house-to-house visitations in order to examine into the doctrine and manner of life of each inhabitant. Every family was to be visited at least once a year. The teachers were charged with the duty of instructing the faithful in sound religion, as well as in the necessary preliminary studies, and guarding the purity of doctrine. The elders were to exercise a moral censorship over the people, warn the disorderly, and give notice to the Consistory of cases requiring discipline. The office of the deacons was to care for the poor and sick. The right of electing teachers and pastors belonged to the ministers in office subject to the approval of the Little Council. The elders and deacons were elected by the Little Council with the approval of the Council of Two Hundred.

From these four classes of officials two governing bodies were constituted. The first was the Venerable Company composed of the pastors and teachers of theology. It was entrusted with the general supervision of all strictly ecclesiastical affairs but had no political power. The other was the Consistory which consisted of all the pastors and twelve elders chosen from the several councils by the Little Council subject to the approval of the Council of Two Hundred. The Consistory was the most distinctive feature of Calvin's ecclesiastical order and had no counterpart in any other Protestant church. It regulated public and private morals, and could summon for censure and excommunication any one who "opposed received doctrine, neglected church attendance, rebelled against ecclesiastical good order, or was of evil life." None were exempt from its authority for none were permitted to live in Geneva who had not made a profession of Christianity.

It had at its disposal an officer of the civil government to summon persons before it; if any one refused to appear when summoned the government compelled him to attend. Perverse and flagrant offenders after being excommunicated were handed over to the Little Council for further punishment.

This friendly coöperation between church and state in the matter of discipline gave to the Consistory a peculiar power. While nominally limited to censure and excommunication, it could in reality command any penalty through the civil government; for according to the medieval idea, which Calvin had retained from the Roman Church, the state must punish offences against religion only at the bidding of the church. To this there was considerable opposition on the part of the secular authorities; and when the Ordinances were under consideration the Little Council, notwithstanding the tacit acceptance of Calvin's terms at the time of his recall, insisted that to it, and not to the Consistory, should be given the power to punish ecclesiastical offences, including the right of excommunication. In accordance with this determination it inserted the following in the Ordinances: "We have ordered that the said ministers shall have no jurisdiction in this province [discipline], but simply should hear the parties and make the aforesaid remonstrances and on their report we can deliberate and render judgment according to the merits of the case." If this had been permitted to stand it would have completely invalidated Calvin's cherished principle of ecclesiastical autonomy; and before the Ordinances were finally adopted by the General Assembly of citizens he succeeded, but only with much difficulty, in having the action taken by the Little Council rescinded and the original provision with respect to discipline restored. But the Little Council notwithstanding its defeat did not relinquish its claims. In less than two years we find it boldly insisting on the right of excommunication and conceding to the Consistory only the right of admonishing. That it did not succeed in establishing its claim was altogether owing to the vigilance, energy and

courage of Calvin who declared that he would sacrifice everything and return into exile rather than admit the demand of the Little Council. The following year the right of the Consistory to excommunicate was again challenged, this time by the Council of Sixty which by a formal vote declared that "the Consistory has no jurisdiction or power to refuse [the Supper] but only to admonish and then report to the Little Council so that the government may judge the delinquents according to their demerits." Again Calvin's energetic protest that he would suffer exile and even death rather than recognize the right of the civil government, or any part of it, to exercise the power of excommunication, forestalled further action and left the question in the same unsettled condition as before. A period of comparative quiet followed but in 1553 the action of the Little Council in annulling the excommunication of a prominent citizen by the Consistory reopened the whole question. After vainly protesting against such an unprecedented assumption of power Calvin boldly defied the Council, declaring that under no circumstances would he administer the Lord's Supper to one who had been excommunicated. Here again, despite his initial failure, he won a moral victory in the end, inasmuch as the man by remaining away from the Communion, in accordance with the secret advice of the Council, failed to establish his rights. A little later the Council of Two Hundred entered the lists against Calvin by voting that the Consistory had no power to excommunicate without orders from the Little Council. When Calvin again protested it was decided to ask the opinions of the churches of Bern, Zürich, Basel and Schaffhausen. But when these arrived they were found to be so divergent that no further attempt was made at the time to reach a decision. It was only after Calvin's final triumph over his enemies in 1555, and after a commission had been appointed to consider the matter, that the right of the Consistory to exercise the power of excommunication was definitively recognized by the formal decision of the three councils to abide by the Ordinances.

A comparison of the Ordinances of 1541 with the principles of ecclesiastic government laid down in the "Institutes," and the Articles of 1537, as well as with the revised Ordinances of 1561, which were enacted after Calvin's final triumph over the Libertines, will show that Calvin yielded much to the peculiar conditions prevailing at Geneva, and also to the insistent and jealous demands of the Little Council. In the "Institutes" he had contended for the principle of a self-governing church based on the sovereignty of the Christian man. But the Ordinances vested the appointment of the lay portion of the Consistory, not in the congregation, but in the Little Council acting with the advice of the ministers and subject to the approval of the Council of Two Hundred. This together with the provision that the elders should be chosen from the several councils, and not from the congregation, was a departure from Calvin's principles. In other ways, too, the civil government exercised a larger control over ecclesiastical affairs than was warranted by Calvin's views. From the first the church was placed in a position of pecuniary dependence although Calvin had favored the principle of self-support. In a letter to Viret in 1542 he complained that at Geneva the church had been left naked, through the confiscation of all ecclesiastical property by the magistrates, in order to make the ministers more subservient. Besides fixing and paying the salaries of the clergy the magistrates frequently called them to account for their sermons; while on the other hand the rule which required the Little Council to consult the ministers in appointing the lay members of the Consistory was often omitted in practice. The government also voted on the confessions of faith and systems of discipline and gave them the power of law; and in cases where the ministers were not able to settle a doctrinal contention among themselves the Ordinances provided that the matter in dispute should be referred first to the elders and then to the magistrates. This made the government the court of last resort in matters of doctrine as well as of conduct. A final instance

of governmental aggression is afforded by the provision relating to the election of ministers. The original draft of the Ordinances had vested the exclusive right of electing a minister in the other ministers. It had also provided that before the election the candidate should be examined with respect to his doctrine and manner of life by the other ministers. But at the demand of the Little Council this was modified to the extent of giving to that body both the right to confirm the election and the right of being represented at the examination by two of its own members.

With respect to the internal government of the Genevan church the Ordinances exhibit a similar divergence from the principles of Calvin as laid down in the "Institutes." The most notable instance of this is the diminished influence of the people in ecclesiastical affairs. Calvin had held as a cardinal principle that ministers should be elected by the consent of the people. But the Ordinances proceeded on the view that this principle was satisfied by the participation of the secular government, that is, the Little Council, in the election; and in general silence was taken to mean consent so far as the congregation was concerned.

It must be evident, therefore, that in regard to both the relation of church and state at Geneva and the internal government of the church Calvin departed from his cherished views, not only as laid down in the "Institutes," but as seen in the constitution of the French Church which was almost entirely his work. For this there are various reasons. It is very probable that Calvin recognized that under the peculiar conditions prevailing at Geneva excommunication would be practicable only if exercised by laymen chosen by and from the secular government, and that to insist on its exercise by the clergy alone, or by persons elected by the congregation and responsible only to it, would defeat it altogether. It must be remembered that the government of Geneva had legal precedent, not to speak of the universal practice in Protestant lands, on its side when it claimed for itself the supreme au-



thority in ecclesiastical matters. The city had been ruled ecclesiastically by its bishop and when he was expelled the civil government naturally and legally succeeded to his powers and prerogatives; and what is still more to the point, freely exercised them in the interim between the overthrow of Catholicism and the arrival of Calvin, and again during Calvin's enforced absence from Geneva. The consequence was that the government, more particularly the Little Council, did not take kindly to the principle of ecclesiastical independence. It is also very probable that Calvin's previous experience at Geneva, as well as his experience at Strasburg, where he spent the greater part of his period of exile, and where he became acquainted with many of the German reformers, had broadened his outlook and inclined him more to temporize and bend to circumstances. His banishment from Geneva had taught him something of discretion, as well as a practical wisdom that is willing to sacrifice minor points in order to save the main end. He yielded much but he succeeded in saving and vitalizing with his own ideals the main thing—the principle of the moral life of the congregation regulated according to the Word of God through an independent exercise of discipline.

Geneva was both a church and a state; the latter no less than the former felt Calvin's molding power. The Ordinances had no sooner been presented to the Little Council than that body appointed another commission to revise and recodify the laws. In this task Calvin again took a leading part for which his legal training afforded an admirable preparation. The new code was completed in 1543 and continued in force until 1568, when it was superseded by a new revision, which was begun in 1560 under Calvin's immediate direction, and which remained the basis of legislation until the eighteenth century. For more than a century and a half, therefore, the civil constitution of Geneva rested on foundations laid by Calvin.

It will be recalled that the civil government at the time of Calvin's appearance was vested in a popular assembly composed of all the citizens and three councils. While the Coun-

cil of Two Hundred soon came to possess the final authority in making and repealing laws, the Little Council was by far the most important body in the state, possessing large executive and judicial as well as extensive legislative powers. At first its members, other than the treasurer and the eight syndics and ex-syndics, were appointed by the syndics. For a time, too, the syndics appointed the Council of Sixty. But inasmuch as this arrangement was thought to lodge too much power in the hands of the syndics the Council of Two Hundred in 1530 assumed the right of appointing the Little Council, that is, the sixteen members whose membership was not of an *ex officio* character. To restore the balance thus disturbed the Little Council was then given the power to appoint the Two Hundred. The members of the Little Council were also members of the Council of Sixty and both were included in the membership of the Council of Two Hundred.

While the supreme power of the state was at first vested in the General Assembly of citizens, without whose approval no treaties could be made and no law finally adopted, and while the syndics exercised their judicial and administrative powers only as the ministers of the General Assembly, the institution of the two larger councils had the effect of materially curtailing the powers of the general body of citizens. Furthermore, the two large councils met only at the summons of the Little Council, though any member could have either summoned provided he was willing to bear the expenses, amounting to a sol, about a franc, for each member. But the Little Council met regularly. Its membership was small, and also experienced, for it included both the syndics in office and those of the preceding year. The syndics presided over its meetings and had in their hands the immediate direction of the public business. They were the judges in all criminal cases, and together with the Little Council they had the power of passing sentence of death on condemned criminals. It is evident from all this that the real power was lodged in the Little Council.

Calvin left the main features of the Genevan constitution

just as he found them. But in practice the general effect of his influence was to strengthen the tendency towards the concentration of authority in the hands of the Little Council, which had set in long before his settlement in Geneva. Two of the most important changes effected by Calvin were the diminished power of the General Assembly of citizens and the limited range of choice in the election of some of the officials. Thus when the Two Hundred, who were themselves elected by the Little Council, elected the sixteen members of that body, their choice was limited to a list of thirty names submitted by the Little Council. When the General Assembly elected the syndics its choice was again limited to the nominees of the Little Council. Then as to the limited power of the General Assembly. While the Little Council held four regular sittings a week the regular meetings of the General Assembly were reduced to two a year; one in February to choose the syndics, and the other in November to fix the price of wine and elect certain police officials. Other meetings depended on emergencies but became less and less common, particularly after 1555, when Calvin succeeded in having a law enacted making it a high misdemeanor for any one to require a special meeting of the general body of citizens. Still another change enacted at Calvin's suggestion was the rule that nothing should be proposed in the General Assembly which had not been previously considered in the Council of Two Hundred; and nothing in the latter body which had not been considered in the Council of Sixty; and nothing in the Council of Sixty which had not been considered in the Little Council.

The effect, then, of Calvin's influence was to concentrate power in the hands of the Little Council. Apart from the fact that he was by instinct and training an aristocrat rather than a democrat, his experience at Geneva had taught him the unwisdom of putting much power in the hands of the turbulent populace. The conditions prevailing there, particularly during the first years of his rule, absolutely required, as he believed, for the accomplishment of his plans, the concentration of civil power in the hands of the few.

These are the main features of Calvin's civil and ecclesiastical constitutions, but more important than forms of government is the spirit which fills and animates them and the codes of law and morals which give expression to that spirit. The essential qualities of Calvin's legislation may be summed up by saying that it was inquisitorial in character, and that it proceeded from a consuming zeal for the honor of God. Its working principle was that minor offenses should be punished by the Consistory. When the offence merited something more than excommunication the offender was handed over to the Little Council for further punishment. Between the two every conceivable offense against religion, morals and good manners was punished.

Of first importance, of course, were offenses against religion. Neglect of the Lord's Supper was punished by a year's banishment. Absence from public worship was punished by a fine of three sols. For laughing during the sermon three men were imprisoned for three days. The authority of parents was guarded by severe penalties in the spirit of the Old Testament. For attempting to strike his mother a boy of sixteen years was sentenced to death, but on account of his youth the sentence was commuted to a public whipping and banishment. For singing worldly songs to Psalm tunes a young woman was beaten with rods. The saying of hard things against the refugees was severely punished, since things spoken against them, being spoken against martyrs, dishonored God. For abusing Calvin and the Consistory a woman was sentenced to ask mercy of God and required to leave the city within twenty four hours on penalty of losing her head. For daring to question the doctrine of predestination a student was whipped and banished forever from the city. Bolsec, Gentilis and Castelio were all banished for holding heretical opinions. Gruet was beheaded for atheism; and Servetus was burned for heresy and blasphemy. Death by burning was also the penalty for witchcraft. In 1545, during the ravages of the pestilence, not less than twenty men and women were burned for witch-

craft and for having engaged in a supposed conspiracy to spread the disease.

Any word or act which could be construed into approval of the Roman Catholic Church or criticism of the Reformed doctrine and practice was punishable by ecclesiastical or civil penalties or both. In 1552 the Little Council voted that the "Institutes" present "the holy doctrine of God" and that "in future no one shall dare to speak against that book or that doctrine." For playing on the day of the three kings a game associated with that festival some young people were excommunicated. For calling his child Claude, the name of a Catholic saint, instead of Abraham, and for saying that he would sooner leave him unbaptized fifteen years than call him Abraham, a man was sent to jail for four days. A goldsmith was punished for making a chalice; a barber for tonsuring a priest; a citizen for declaring the Pope a good man.

The severity as well as the inquisitorial character of the Genevan legislation is perhaps best seen in the minor points of discipline. Dancing, gambling, the manufacture of cards, luxury, excesses at public entertainments, extravagance and immodesty of dress, were punished by censure, excommunication, fines and imprisonment. Drunkards were fined three sols for each offense. Gamblers were placed in the pillory. The theatres were closed and for a time the taverns; and in place of the latter five "abbeys" were established to provide public entertainment. But no one was to be served with food or drink at these places who refused to say grace; all oaths and unseemly conversation was forbidden; and Bibles were required to be always at hand. The customary penalty for dancing was imprisonment. Marriage was strictly regulated. Brides were forbidden to wear wreaths in their bonnets. The wearing of jewelry and gay colors was forbidden. Eating and drinking were required to be moderate. Only one dish of meat and one of vegetables, no pastry, and only native wines, were permitted at an ordinary meal. Banquets and public entertainments were subjected to a strict supervision.

The having or reading of immoral books was punished by imprisonment.

Of the two leading features of Calvin's legislation, its inquisitorial character and its consuming zeal for the honor of God, the former was by no means peculiar to Geneva. A study of medieval municipal life will show that in this particular it did not differ from other medieval cities. It was in fact the universal medieval practice to regulate the private life to the minutest details. "Every instance quoted by modern historians," says Lindsay, "to prove Calvin's despotic interference with the details of private life can be paralleled by references to police books of medieval towns of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries." Not only was this narrow and inquisitorial legislation not peculiar to Geneva, but it was not even introduced by Calvin. Most of it had been placed on the statute books long before his settlement in Geneva, and in many instances it dated from Roman times. To say that he acquiesced in it, that he sanctioned its pains and penalties, that he followed its methods of procedure, is only saying that he belonged to the sixteenth century and was ruled by its ideas.

The distinguishing feature of Calvin's legislation was not its inquisitorial character, but its exceptional severity, the impartiality with which it was administered, and the ideals which inspired it. Calvin's character exhibits much of the spirit of the Old Testament. Reverence for law was a part of his being. To make the will of God as revealed in the Bible an authoritative guide for social as well as personal direction, to bring thought, feeling and will in subjection to it, to bring not only his own life but also the lives of others in conformity to it, was Calvin's supreme and absorbing purpose; and whatsoever dishonored or seemed to dishonor God by transgressing his law excited Calvin to a pitiless severity. That he was attracted to the Old Testament and profoundly influenced by its spirit of legalism was because he found there a divine example of national government. In this reverence for law and zeal for God's honor lies the peculiar spirit of Calvin's legis-

lation, although other factors like the desperate measures of his enemies, and the low moral tone of the populace, may have contributed to the same end. But that these were not the controlling considerations may be inferred from the fact that after his final triumph, and after the worst elements had been driven from the city, and the state of morals had materially improved, his severity instead of being moderated was intensified. The contention that Calvin did not always control the government, and cannot, therefore, be justly held responsible for the severity of the laws is equally untenable for two reasons. In the first place there is evidence to show that Calvin's zeal and severity were not infrequently moderated by the Little Council; and, secondly, after his final triumph in 1555, if not before, he was the absolute master of Geneva. It is true he never held civil office; in fact he was not made a citizen until 1559. He took no part in the proceedings of the several councils, and never appeared before them unless some ecclesiastical question was under consideration or his advice had been asked. And yet few sovereigns have ruled so absolutely as Calvin ruled Geneva. His counsel was sought in all important matters of state. When he wanted a new law he had only to present a request for it to the Little Council in the name of the Consistory. But while he ruled absolutely he ruled through his wonderful power of persuasion, though his masterful intellect and iron will, and above all through the moral power which came to him from the conviction that what he stood for was the will of God. He was Geneva. It made little difference that the relation which he set up between church and state was an impracticable one under ordinary conditions. His masterful personality preserved harmony between them because he was the mainspring of both. It made little difference that on paper his scheme subjected the church to the state. For whatever power was wanting to the church to protect itself against the aggressions of the state he more than supplied; so that, instead of the church being subject to the state, the state was in practice subordinated to the church.



Calvin's absorbing purpose was to make Geneva a model Christian community, not, however, for the sake of Geneva, but for the sake of Protestantism. He was constantly looking beyond the narrow confines of the little republic, advising, exhorting, comforting and instructing; and it was owing altogether to his masterful influence that non-German Protestantism, despite diversities of race, language, government and culture, became essentially one in doctrine and practice. It is only from this larger outlook that Calvin's influence on civil liberty can be measured, for not only would his influence have been insignificant if confined to Geneva, but the real significance of his principles was often obscured at Geneva by such untoward conditions as the presence and active coöperation of a friendly, if at times jealous, government, and its limited territory and population—Geneva at no time numbered over twenty thousand souls—which made possible the complete domination of secular and ecclesiastical interests by a single personality.

As distinguished from Lutheranism, Calvinism stood, first, for a certain type of doctrine, and, secondly, for a certain principle of ecclesiastical organization. Doctrinally they differed mainly with respect to the Lord's Supper. In ecclesiastical government Calvinism rejected the consistorial system of the Lutheran Churches which was based on Luther's theory that the *jus episcopale* belongs to the magistrate. While the Lutheran churches followed the medieval church on both points, that is, the doctrine of the Lord's Supper and the principle of ecclesiastical organization, Calvinism insisted on strictly following the teachings of the Word of God. It is true that the resemblance among the Reformed churches was closer in doctrine than in government. Nevertheless, with the exception of the Anglican Church, they accepted, in theory at least, Calvin's principle of ecclesiastical organization which they believed to be contained in the new Testament and exemplified by the primitive church. In practice, however, Calvin's principle that "the ultimate source of authority lies in

the membership of the Christian community, inspired by the presence of Christ promised to all his people," was materially modified by the prevailing fear that it might lead back to the medieval system of ecclesiastical arrogance and tyranny from which Protestantism was trying to escape. The consequence of this fear, and of the modifications of Calvin's principle which it inspired, was a considerable variety of ecclesiastical organizations among the Reformed churches. For while some of the Reformed leaders aimed at restoring the theocratic democracy of the primitive church, others like Cranmer and Zwingli believed that the civil authority might be safely left to represent the Christian democracy and regulate its ecclesiastical arrangements.

In order, therefore, to see Calvin's ecclesiastical idea at its best it is necessary to find a Reformed church struggling into existence and maintaining itself under the rule of a hostile government. Calvin's system of ecclesiastical organization was peculiarly suited to the needs of a church oppressed by the civil power and compelled to rely on its own inherent strength. Such a church was the French church, the "church under the cross," which reproduced more perfectly than any other the conditions of primitive Christianity, and which had more liberty to determine its own constitution than any of the Reformed churches.

Because of his ability as a theologian, his genius for organization, and his acknowledged authority, Calvin became the real founder of the French Reformed Church and to his death he remained its inspiring force. Then he was himself a Frenchman, not a foreigner, nor an enemy of France whom it would be treason to follow; while the chief source of his power, logic impregnated with the passion of conviction, was peculiarly a French quality. Calvin had many points of contact with France. As a student of law and the humanities he had made many acquaintances outside religious circles. With the leading Protestants he maintained an extensive correspondence. To the persecuted he sent letters of encouragement.

For those who had become involved in controversies because of their faith he prepared brief theological treatises. To the struggling congregations he sent models for confessions of faith and rules of discipline. Among his correspondents were many persons of social and political distinction. French refugees found a ready welcome at Geneva and came in large numbers, for it was situated on the borders of France and spoke its language. Besides refugees many students were attracted to Geneva by the fame of its schools. Calvin himself taught theology throughout his Genevan ministry; and through his influence many noted scholars were induced to settle in the city. In 1559 the educational system was thoroughly reorganized. At the same time the Academy was established. Its success was assured from the first for it opened with twelve hundred students. Of this number three hundred, most of them foreigners, were in the higher departments. Calvin's design was to make the Academy first of all a training school for French Protestantism; and for a full half-century his influence made it the leading theological school for non-German Protestantism. From it went forth large numbers of young men, who were convinced that Calvin's message was that of God, and who were eager to suffer and fight for the faith that it taught. Most of them were Frenchmen who returned to their native land to preach the new doctrine and be pastors to the struggling congregations that began to be organized soon after the middle of the century. In 1559 nineteen pastors were either asked for or sent from Geneva, and twelve the following year. In 1561 ninety were demanded but could not be supplied. Others, students and refugees, travelled over France as colporteurs distributing at the risk of their lives the Bibles, tracts and sermons which were printed by Geneva's thirty printing shops. The "Institutes" and many of Calvin's commentaries were distributed in the same way and were widely read by both clergy and laity.

In these various ways Calvin molded French Protestantism, not only giving it its creed, constitution and discipline, but

also breathing into it his own moral earnestness. The first congregation was organized at Paris in 1555 on the Genevan plan. Four years later a national synod was formed and a constitution drawn up by Calvin adopted. Under this constitution each congregation was governed by a consistory composed of ministers, elders and deacons. The elders and deacons were elected by the congregation, the ministers by the elders and deacons. Congregations were combined into groups over which were the colloquies consisting of the ministers and an elder from each congregation in the group elected by the consistory. Above the colloquies, and constituted in the same way, were the synods, provincial and national. This synodal feature of the French church was an extension of the Genevan system. For some reason Calvin made no attempt to establish synods at Geneva, but as soon as his system was applied to a large community they became a practical necessity.

The French church was more democratic in its internal government than the Genevan church, while its relation to the state was one of complete independence. Its independence extended even to pecuniary matters for it was entirely supported by the voluntary contributions of its membership, a feature which Calvin never succeeded in establishing at Geneva. The French church had the same rigorous discipline as Geneva. The consistory had the power of excommunication subject, however, to the approval of the provincial synod.

For more than forty years the French Protestants acted on Calvin's principle of uncomplaining submission to the civil government. But the renewed persecutions which followed the death of Henry IV. had the effect of making them more and more a political party, so that there was rapidly developed among them a spirit of hostility to the absolutism of the crown and a love of independence such as was unknown elsewhere in France; and this, too, at a time when the French crown was consolidating its power and crushing out every vestige of the old spirit of feudal independence. At a time also when statesmen still refused to see any middle ground between abso-

lutism and anarchy, this "church under the cross" was demonstrating the possibility of reconciling the two opposite principles of popular rights and supreme central control.

In England, Scotland and the Netherlands Calvin's influence was almost as great as in France. In all three, however, this influence was more pronounced in doctrine than in government and discipline. Thus the Scottish Confession of 1560, the *Confessio Belgica*, 1561, were purely, and the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England largely, Calvinistic. In the matter of government and discipline Calvin's influence was exerted in more indirect fashion. For Scotland and the Netherlands took their ecclesiastical constitutions from France rather than from Geneva. England, on the other hand, did not adopt Calvin's system of government at all save for a brief spell.

In the Netherlands the Reformation at first took the Lutheran form but the influence of France soon gave it a prevalingly Calvinistic tone. This came about through the influx of Reformed preachers from France into the French-speaking Walloon provinces of the south, from which the Reformed doctrines spread northward until the whole country had become strongly Calvinistic. This French influence was greatly strengthened by the general practice of sending young men from the Netherlands to Geneva to be educated. While Calvin's theology was accepted without question in the *Confessio Belgica*, his system of ecclesiastical organization suffered considerable modification. As long as the government was Catholic the Reformed Churches were altogether independent of the state as in France. When the government became Protestant some favored the giving to the state of a large measure of control over the church, while others contended that the church should exercise discipline through its own officers and appoint its own ministers. The result of the controversy was something of a compromise between the Calvinistic and the Lutheran systems of ecclesiastical organization. The church was limited to a provincial organization. The

provinces were divided into classes and each congregation was governed according to the Genevan model. The right to exercise discipline was vested in the elders with the right of appeal to the magistrates.

To Scotland Calvinism gave for the first time a really representative system of popular government. Her parliaments had long been merely the feudal gatherings of prelates and nobles in which peasant and burgher had little or no voice. But with the introduction of the Reformation the people were given a share in the administration of affairs, not only in ecclesiastical, but also in civil, matters, for the two were largely fused into one form of control. Monarchical power was limited both in theory and in practice. Not only did the Scotch reformers successfully insist on the freedom of the pulpit, and thus effectually establish the principle of liberty of thought and speech, but they also boldly contended, as Knox did more than once in Queen Mary's presence, that the people may rightly resist a tyrannical government, and that where kings neglect their duty the people may do it for them and even restrain them in case they spare the wicked and oppress the innocent. It has been well said that it was the descendants of men, taught by Knox to "with stand the divine right of kings to do wrong," who set the example to England of effective resistance resulting eventually in the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. "Thirty thousand armed Covenanters sitting down on Dun's Law" in 1639 became, as Carlyle expressed it, "the signal for all England rising up." James I. thoroughly understood the political quality of Calvinism and its effect on such theories of absolute monarchy as he entertained. At the Hampton Court Conference in 1604 he voiced his opinion in this fashion: "A Scottish Presbytery as well agreth with a Monarchy as God and the Devill. Then Jacke and Tom and Will and Dick shall meet, and at their pleasure censure me and my Councell and all our proceedings."

The earlier English reformers did not aim at anything more

than the correction of the practical abuses of the papacy. This conservative tendency continued until the return of the exiles who had fled to the continent during the reign of Mary. Because of their rejection of Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper these exiles had been coldly received in the Lutheran communities of northern Germany. But in the free cities of southern Germany and especially in Switzerland they received a cordial welcome. The consequence was that most of them settled at Geneva and Zürich. In one day in October, 1557, no less than fifty of these Marian exiles were given the right of settlement at Geneva; and in 1560 just before their return to England a number of them formally thanked the Genevan government for its hospitality.

The return of these exiles gave at once a more radical turn to the English Reformation, particularly in the matter of doctrine. The way for this had been prepared by Calvin's correspondence during the reign of Edward VI. with Archbishop Cranmer, the Duke of Somerset and the young king himself. By 1660 the earlier inclination of English Protestantism to the views of Luther had given way to Calvinism. After the accession of Elizabeth the "Institutes" were, as Blunt says, "generally in the hands of the clergy and might be considered their text-book of theology." Hardwick says that the "Institutes" became a sort of oracle and text-book for the students in the universities. As late as 1578 the use of Calvin's catechism was required at the university of Cambridge; and at both Oxford and Cambridge the professors of theology were pronounced Calvinists into the seventeenth century. When Elizabeth came to the throne she was strongly impressed with the importance of filling the more important posts in the church with men who could be relied upon to oppose Catholicism. But such men were to be found for the most part only among the Calvinists. Then, too, the younger ministers were largely Calvinists owing to the Calvinistic atmosphere of the universities. Finally, the soldiers sent by Elizabeth to the aid of the Dutch in their struggle for independence had returned



like the Marian exiles with their heads full of the doctrines of Calvin. The consequence of all these influences was that after English Protestantism turned away from the views of Luther all parties were Calvinists in theology until the coming in of Arminian theories in the reign of James I.

In the matter of ecclesiastical organization and discipline the influence of Calvin was not so apparent at first as in theology. When the Marian exiles returned from the continent they found the royal authority thoroughly enlisted in the cause of episcopacy. The reason why Elizabeth was resolved to maintain the episcopal system was its entire accord with her notions of absolute rule. She was shrewd enough to see in the possibilities of a church independent of the state what her successor, James I., expressed in the maxim, "No bishop, no king." And against the royal authority, strongly entrenched in the affections of the people and actively supported by a large party of moderate reformers, the followers of Calvin who wanted to introduce the Genevan discipline could make no headway.

A third thing which the Marian exiles brought back with them was a certain simplicity of worship which they had learned to admire at Geneva. They wanted a much more radical reformation of worship than the leaders of English Protestantism favored or Elizabeth would permit. They opposed the retention of everything from the Roman Church which was not positively enjoined by the Scriptures. In all this they were in thorough accord with the party which from the beginning had contended for a more radical departure from the practice of the Roman Church. This attitude did not at first involve any opposition to the Anglican Church on doctrinal grounds, for all parties in English Protestantism were Calvinists in theology; nor on the ground of the proper relation of church and state, inasmuch as this radical element was not opposed to the retention of bishops, although it stoutly denied the claim that bishops possessed powers superior to other ministers. Its opposition was aimed wholly at first at

the retention of certain vestments and ceremonies which to them savored too strongly of Romish superstitions. The determination of Elizabeth to retain these ancient observances, to which she was inclined both by personal and political considerations, and from which her advisers did little to dissuade her from fear, perhaps, of driving her back to Catholicism, divided the church at the very beginning of her reign into two parties, the Puritans and the Anglicans.

The continued opposition of the authorities of the church to the changes demanded by the Puritans led the latter to a critical examination of the foundations of the ecclesiastical system which permitted these relics of popery. They inquired whether such a polity could rest on a divine sanction; and the test which they applied was the Calvinistic principle that nothing must be permitted, whether in doctrine, worship or government, which is not expressly enjoined by the teaching of Scripture. The results of their examination were far-reaching. They held with Calvin that church polity is authoritatively taught in the Scriptures, and that the church is not at liberty to depart from it; that in this divinely ordained polity the management of church affairs belongs to the church itself and to its officers, and not to the magistrates; that while the magistrates may not dictate to the church they must nevertheless protect and defend it by repressing heresy and blasphemy; that the system of diocesan episcopacy is not, and the presbyterian system is, sanctioned by the Scriptures; and that the people of each parish ought to have a share in the selection of their ministers. All this is thoroughly Calvinistic, and nothing could be more diametrically opposed to the Elizabethan policy of governing the church through officers of royal appointment and laws of royal imposition.

Puritanism grew rapidly after the first decade of Elizabeth's reign; and when its opponents found themselves powerless to arrest its progress they gradually shifted their ground and gave a new character to the controversy. At first the principal argument of the Anglicans in behalf of a diocesan

episcopacy was the royal preference for it. But towards the close of Elizabeth's reign they set up the theory of its divine authority. The effect of this was to give to the whole controversy a political character, for it showed more and more clearly that the question of the relation of the clergy to the church, and of the church to the state, and the question of the relation of subject and ruler, were at bottom one and the same question. According to the Anglican view the clergy were either the representatives of the sovereign in the administration of religious interests, or a divinely appointed order, subject to the regulative control of the sovereign. In neither event were the clergy in any way responsible to the people to whom they ministered. In either case, too, it followed that by virtue of his authority over a divinely appointed order the sovereign must himself be of divine appointment and can be held responsible to his people for his actions no more than the clergy can to their flocks for their actions. In direct opposition to this the Puritan contended, as he had been taught by Calvin, that the minister can serve his congregation only by its consent and that consequently he is responsible to it alone. From Calvin the Puritan had learned also to test everything by the Word of God. This taught him to think for himself. But he did not have far to go before he found himself confronted by the question whether there was not some higher law than his will by which a king's acts might be judged, and whether he was not, in the last analysis, responsible to his subjects in much the same way as the minister was to his congregation.

The great body of Puritans did not contemplate separation from the church. They looked for its further reformation through the government which had already carried the church over from Catholicism to Anglicanism. Their immediate object, therefore, was to secure control of the government. Although this was accomplished during the Commonwealth the Puritans were not able, even during their brief political supremacy, to establish their political and ecclesiastical principles in their entirety. For while Parliament established in a

general way the presbyterian system, it refused to accept the Calvinistic theory of the Church as a power distinct from the church and having the independent right of excommunication. In serious matters of discipline it permitted an appeal from the highest ecclesiastical tribunals to itself. But before this system could be fully established the Independents under the leadership of Cromwell succeeded in possessing themselves of the supreme power in the state. The principles of the Independents, or radical Puritans, present a mixture of Calvinistic and Anabaptistic elements. They held the principle of the self-governing power of the local congregation, rejected the government of prelates and synods alike, favoring only voluntary associations for mutual counsel and the prosecution of Christian work. These radical Puritans were again divided into a moderate and a radical wing. The latter held that discipline should be administered as the work of the whole congregation, that each congregation should chose its own ministers and other officers, and even ordain those chosen to the ministry. The former were less democratic for they entrusted the work of ecclesiastical administration, not to the congregation, but to its officers, who were thus constituted a speaking aristocracy in the face of a silent democracy. In matters of doctrine, and in making the Bible the ultimate rule of polity as well as of faith, the several bodies of Puritans were not only at one but strict Calvinists.

The significance of Puritanism does not lie in any principle of religious toleration, for with the exception of some of the more advanced Independents like Vane and Milton, who strongly deprecated the use of coercion in matters of religion, and contended that the church should be independent of the state even to the extent of supporting itself by the voluntary contributions of its members, the Puritans were not the advocates of toleration. They believed that within a given community there should be uniformity of religious belief and practice, and that this uniformity should be secured and maintained through the coercive power of the state. The real import of

Puritanism is that it shattered the monarchical power in England at a time when monarchical power was bearing down all opposition in the other great European countries. It was not an accident that in those parts of England, in which Puritanism was most vigorous, the most effective opposition to the tyranny of the Stuarts was developed, and the future settlers of New England were mainly recruited. And furthermore, in fighting the battle of republican government in England in the seventeenth century, Puritanism laid the foundations of civil and political liberty for all time. "If there ever were men," says Fiske, "who laid down their lives in the cause of all mankind it was those grim old Ironsides whose watchwords were texts from Holy Writ, whose battle cries were hymns of praise. It was to the alliance of intense religious enthusiasm with the instinct of self-government and the spirit of personal independence that the preservation of English freedom is due." That England has exercised a profound influence on the Continent along political lines is shown by the fact that its civil institutions have been largely copied by the nations of northern and western Europe, and by the further fact that it was the study of English institutions by Montesquieu, Turgot, Voltaire and Rousseau that gave form and direction to the French Revolution.

In German Switzerland Calvin had comparatively little influence at first. Its Reformed churches had been established and their form fixed before Calvin's work began; and they were not, therefore, easily molded to his ideas. Then there were also more specific reasons. At Zürich Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper was regarded as being too much like Luther's, and for a time, indeed, Calvin had felt himself drawn more to the Lutheran, than to the Zwinglian, Reformation. Basel never took kindly to Calvin's predestinarian views; while Bern persistently refused to be reconciled to Calvin during his lifetime, largely on account of his theory of ecclesiastical independence, but also because Calvin had in a number of instances effectually thwarted the schemes of

Bern to extend its control over Geneva. But after the middle of the century, beginning with the agreement between Calvin and Bullinger on the Lord's Supper in the *Consensus Tigurinus*, the doctrinal differences between Geneva and the Protestant churches of German Switzerland gradually disappeared through the adoption by the latter of the essential features of Calvin's system of doctrine, although these were often adopted in modified form. In the sphere of ecclesiastical organization and government the churches of German Switzerland were separated from those of the French-speaking cantons by persistent and fundamental differences. Calvin's strenuous discipline seems to have had no affinity for German-speaking peoples and none of the German cantons ever adopted it.

In Germany the Calvinistic theology was modified by Melancthonian elements. At first the agreement between Melancthon and Calvin was confined to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Because the followers of Melancthon in the Lutheran Church accepted Calvin's theory of Christ's presence in the Supper they were fiercely proscribed by the Ultra-Lutheran party. This served to bring the former into still closer sympathy with Calvin, although the latter's predestinarian views were not generally accepted. The Academy of Geneva which attracted many students from southwestern Germany was a most important factor in bringing the two parties together. This union of Calvinism and Melancthonianism is best seen in the Palatinate, which adopted the Reformed faith in 1563, and whose doctrinal standard, the Heidelberg Catechism, embodies the essential features of Calvin's system in irenic moderation. This catechism obtained wide approval beyond Germany, and in Nassau, Bremen, Anhalt, Hesse, Baden and Brandenburg, within half a century from its publication, it superseded the Lutheran standards.

In Germany as in German Switzerland Calvin's system of discipline never took root. In the matter of ecclesiastical organization the Reformed churches of Germany occupied an

intermediate position between Calvinism and Lutheranism. The only exception to this is to be found in the churches of the Lower Rhine, which were founded by Walloon refugees from the Netherlands, and which introduced the presbyterian system just as it had been developed in France. In the Palatinate, on the other hand, the Calvinistic system suffered considerable modification. While consistories were established in the congregations, the supreme power over all the churches was vested in a commission of three theologians and three laymen all appointed by the government. Between this commission and the congregational consistories there were superintendents or inspectors. Then there were also synods, provincial and general, composed only of ministers.

That Calvin has profoundly influenced the religious and political development of America can require no argument. The English Puritans, the Scotch and Irish Presbyterians, the Dutch Burghers and the French Huguenots, have established his faith, and, to a large extent, his polity wide over the continent. It was from these elements, trained in the spirit and principles of Calvin, that the earliest and most aggressive opponents of British tyranny came in the eighteenth century. It would have been strange, indeed, if these peoples who settled in such large numbers in the New World had not taken a leading part in the molding of its social and political institutions. It would have been stranger still if the followers of Cromwell and Milton, of Knox and Melville, of Coligny and William the Silent, all of whom acknowledged Calvin as their spiritual father, had left behind them, when they came to America, their sturdy spirit of civil and political liberty, and had become slaves after they and their fathers had learned from the teachings of Calvin to "withstand the divine right of kings to do wrong."

The significance of Calvinism for civil liberty may be summed up in the following propositions. Its burning realization of the absolute sovereignty of God, which is its all-pervading principle, and in the light of which earthly rulers are but



fellow-vassals, to be served and obeyed only in so far as they are faithful subjects of the King of kings, inspired men everywhere to battle against oppression. It furnished the only effective system for the organization and maintenance of an oppressed Protestantism, for while Lutheranism, Zwinglianism and Anglicanism were all dependent on the state, Calvinism could flourish, not only without state support, but even in the face of the active hostility of the state. It revived the medieval doctrine of the responsibility of kings to a spiritual power at a time when royalty was trampling all responsibility to God and man beneath its feet; at a time when kings recognized no law but their own wills, and demanded unquestioning obedience from prince and pauper alike, it brought royal conduct to the tests of the Gospel and human reason.

But it was only where it did its work as a discipline as well as a theology that Calvinism accomplished all this. On the other hand, where it was only a body of doctrine, as in Germany, and not also a peculiar conception of the Christian life, its influence on political thought and practice was inconspicuous.

LANCASTER, PA.

## VIII.

### CALVINISM IN THE REFORMED CHURCHES OF GERMANY.

BY PROF. GEORGE W. RICHARDS, D.D.

Different tendencies appeared in German protestanism from its inception. Luther indeed was the master spirit; but it became clear very early that not all the German reformers were Lutherans. The variations came to view as the work of reconstruction advanced. The point of divergence was the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. A contention arose through the spread of Zwingli's views in South Germany. His writings circulated, as rapidly and as widely as those of Luther, in Swabia, Franconia, Bavaria and Alsace. Three hundred copies of the "*Auslegung der Schlussreden*" (July, 1523) were sold immediately after their publication in Nuremberg alone. Albert Dürer and other prominent Nurembergers became ardent advocates of the Swiss doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

In Strassburg there was a group of independent reformers who were neither strictly Lutheran nor Zwinglian, though they sympathized with the latter. Their leader was Martin Bucer. At the Marburg Colloquy (1529), he and his associates (Hedio and Jacob Sturm) allied themselves with Zwingli and opposed the Wittenbergers. At the Diet of Augsburg (1530) the protestants were represented by three distinct confessions. The first was the *Augustana* of the Lutherans; the second, the *Tetrapolitana* of four free cities of south Germany—Strassburg, Memmingen, Constance and Lindau; and the third, the *Ratio Fidei* of Zwingli. That Bucer and his fol-

<sup>1</sup> "Tercentenary Monument in Commemoration of the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism," 1863; article by Dr. Ebrard, pp. 89-90.

lowers differed from Luther is evident from the fact that they were refused the privilege of signing the *Augustana*, the tenth article excepted, and therefore felt constrained to draw up a separate confession. That they did not agree in all points with Zwingli we may infer from a letter of Bucer and Capito to Melanchthon (July 28, 1530) saying: "No one is ignorant how nothing is common to us with him (Zwingli)."<sup>2</sup> Afterwards Bucer played the part of mediator between the Swiss and the Saxons, and by the adoption of the Wittenberg Concord (1536) for a time reconciled the two parties, especially in Germany.

Another division developed among the Lutherans themselves. It came to be known as Melanchthonianism, Phillipism, or Crypto-Calvinism. Up to the Augsburg Diet Melanchthon was a loyal disciple of Luther. He had no more sympathy with the Zwinglians than his inflexible master. He charged them with being unscriptural and with neglecting to mention in their writing justification by faith.<sup>3</sup> Not long after the memorable Diet he showed signs of wavering in some of his doctrinal positions.<sup>4</sup> He began to look with more favor on Bucer's theory of the eucharist. The latter, in a letter to Schwebel (November 9, 1530) wrote that "Melanchthon said he would be satisfied with him (Bucer) if only it were acknowledged that Christ is present in the Supper, not in the bread; and present to the soul, not to the body." Melanchthon, however, was slow in announcing his change of view. He was held in check partly by his regard for Luther and partly by his peace-loving and mediating disposition. Evidences of the change are found in his correspondence with

<sup>2</sup> "Book of Concord," Jacobs, II., p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> "Tercentenary Monument," p. 97. Ebrard adds that "Melanchthon must have given these *libri* a very superficial perusal."

<sup>4</sup> Schaff says: "But from the time of the Wittenberg Concord in 1536, or even earlier, Melanchthon began to change his view on the real presence as well as his view on predestination and free-will; in the former he approached Calvin, in the latter he departed from him" ("Ch. Hist.," VIII., p. 665). The variations are indicated in the footnotes of the *Augustana invariata* (Schaff's "Creeds," III., pp. 7-73).

## VIII.

### CALVINISM IN THE REFORMED CHURCHES OF GERMANY.

BY PROF. GEORGE W. RICHARDS, D.D.

Different tendencies appeared in German protestanism from its inception. Luther indeed was the master spirit; but it became clear very early that not all the German reformers were Lutherans. The variations came to view as the work of reconstruction advanced. The point of divergence was the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. A contention arose through the spread of Zwingli's views in South Germany. His writings circulated, as rapidly and as widely as those of Luther, in Swabia, Franconia, Bavaria and Alsace. Three hundred copies of the "*Auslegung der Schlussreden*" (July, 1523) were sold immediately after their publication in Nuremberg alone. Albert Dürer and other prominent Nurembergers became ardent advocates of the Swiss doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

In Strassburg there was a group of independent reformers who were neither strictly Lutheran nor Zwinglian, though they sympathized with the latter. Their leader was Martin Bucer. At the Marburg Colloquy (1529), he and his associates (Hedio and Jacob Sturm) allied themselves with Zwingli and opposed the Wittenbergers. At the Diet of Augsburg (1530) the protestants were represented by three distinct confessions. The first was the *Augustana* of the Lutherans; the second, the *Tetrapolitana* of four free cities of south Germany—Strassburg, Memmingen, Constance and Lindau; and the third, the *Ratio Fidei* of Zwingli. That Bucer and his fol-

<sup>1</sup> "Tercentenary Monument in Commemoration of the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism," 1863; article by Dr. Ebrard, pp. 89-90.

lowers differed from Luther is evident from the fact that they were refused the privilege of signing the *Augustana*, the tenth article excepted, and therefore felt constrained to draw up a separate confession. That they did not agree in all points with Zwingli we may infer from a letter of Bucer and Capito to Melancthon (July 28, 1530) saying: "No one is ignorant how nothing is common to us with him (Zwingli)."<sup>2</sup> Afterwards Bucer played the part of mediator between the Swiss and the Saxons, and by the adoption of the Wittenberg Concord (1536) for a time reconciled the two parties, especially in Germany.

Another division developed among the Lutherans themselves. It came to be known as Melancthonianism, Phillipism, or Crypto-Calvinism. Up to the Augsburg Diet Melancthon was a loyal disciple of Luther. He had no more sympathy with the Zwinglians than his inflexible master. He charged them with being unscriptural and with neglecting to mention in their writing justification by faith.<sup>3</sup> Not long after the memorable Diet he showed signs of wavering in some of his doctrinal positions.<sup>4</sup> He began to look with more favor on Bucer's theory of the eucharist. The latter, in a letter to Schwebel (November 9, 1530) wrote that "Melancthon said he would be satisfied with him (Bucer) if only it were acknowledged that Christ is present in the Supper, not in the bread; and present to the soul, not to the body." Melancthon, however, was slow in announcing his change of view. He was held in check partly by his regard for Luther and partly by his peace-loving and mediating disposition. Evidences of the change are found in his correspondence with

<sup>2</sup> "Book of Concord," Jacobs, II., p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> "Tercentenary Monument," p. 97. Ebrard adds that "Melancthon must have given these *libri* a very superficial perusal."

<sup>4</sup> Schaff says: "But from the time of the Wittenberg Concord in 1536, or even earlier, Melancthon began to change his view on the real presence as well as his view on predestination and free-will; in the former he approached Calvin, in the latter he departed from him" ("Ch. Hist.," VIII., p. 665). The variations are indicated in the footnotes of the *Augustana invariata* (Schaff's "Creeds," III., pp. 7-73).

his friends and in the church orders and liturgies which were prepared under his influence. He took a positive and public stand boldly announcing his variations from original Lutheranism in the *Augustana variata* of 1540. A comparison of his statements of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper in 1530 and in 1540, indicate a marked departure from the theory of the real presence as held by Luther and an approach to that of Bucer. Melanchthon had many followers, especially in the region from which the *Tetrapolitana* (1530) had come in South Germany.

Enough has been said to convince the reader that German Reformed protestantism was not wholly an importation from a foreign country. It was doubtless allied and indebted to Zwinglianism, and yet it differed from it. It reached its completion in Calvinism, and yet it existed in its earlier stage before Calvin came to Strassburg, and had a molding influence on Calvin himself. He was in a sense both a pupil<sup>5</sup> and a master. During his ministry in Strassburg he associated with Bucer and was on friendly terms with the Lutherans. The Germans generally counted him as an adherent of the Augsburg Confession as interpreted by Bucer and Melanchthon.<sup>6</sup> The Swiss gave him up as one of their number and criticized him as a deserter of their cause.<sup>7</sup> When he met Melanchthon at Frankfort he was gratified to find that they agreed substantially on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper and on the urgent need of ecclesiastical discipline.<sup>8</sup>

It must not be inferred, however, that he was in perfect accord with Luther or even Melanchthon, though more nearly

<sup>5</sup> Professor Williston Walker says: "No part of Calvin's life was more important in his spiritual and mental development, however, than the three years from 1538 to 1541, which he spent in Strassburg" ("Papers of the American Society of Church History," 2d series, I., p. 71).

<sup>6</sup> He subscribed the Augsburg Confession at Ratisbon in 1541. "Nec vero Augustanam Confessionem repudio, cui pridem volens ac lubens subscripsi, sicut eam autor ipse interpretatus est" ("Das Leben Johann Calvins," von Paul Henry, II., p. 505).

<sup>7</sup> *Idem*, I., p. 265.

<sup>8</sup> "Letters of Calvin," Bonnet, I., pp. 130, 136, 137.

with the latter than with the former.<sup>9</sup> He carefully distinguished his definition of the eucharist from Luther's.<sup>10</sup> He could not concede a corporal real presence and an oral manducation, nor could he admit the ubiquity of Christ's humanity which was a metaphysical presupposition of the Lutheran doctrine of the sacrament. On other points, such as the use of forms and ceremonies in worship, the organization and discipline of the congregation, and the conception of Christian life and morality, the Genevan and the Wittenberger differed, although these subjects for the time were overshadowed by the eucharistic controversy.

However congenial he and Melanchthon were, while the former dwelt on German soil, and even for more than a decade after he returned to Geneva, their correspondence became less frequent toward the close of their lives. They were men of totally different temperaments. Melanchthon's irenic spirit and almost cowardly diffidence, even to the sacrifice of truth and conviction, exasperated the logical, consistent, and courageous Genevan. On the doctrine of predestination they never could agree. Calvin wrote to his friend as follows: "To speak frankly my conscience forbids me to agree with you on this doctrine (predestination). You always hold to the general promise of the Scriptures addressed to all. Surely no one denies them but why is it that they are not realized in all? Because God does not impart His power to all."<sup>11</sup> He furthermore charged him with having drawn his pen across the article on predestination after he had read the *Consensus Tigurinus*. In spite of these differences they never ceased to respect each other, and in a most touching paragraph in his tract against Hesshuss, a year after Melanchthon's death,

<sup>9</sup> He warned Bucer against yielding too much to Luther, and called many of Luther's doctrines unreasonable and intolerable ("Johannes Calvin," Stähelin, I., pp. 200-201).

<sup>10</sup> See his "Short Treatise On The Lord's Supper" (Tracts, Eng. trans. II., pp. 195-198).

<sup>11</sup> Stähelin, II., p. 249.



Calvin paid a tribute to his distinguished and scholarly contemporary.<sup>12</sup>

For about two decades the Melanchthonian-Bucer-Calvinistic interpretation of protestantism was considered not only inoffensive but was generally accepted by the German Lutherans. The Wittenberg Concord was favorably received by the princes. The "enriched or amended" *Augustana* was submitted at the Colloquy of Worms (1540-1541) without protest either from the imperial deputies or the protestant theologians.<sup>13</sup> Luther himself, about that time, expressed himself as pleased "that the Confession stood firm." Melanchthon reported that "Calvin stood in great favor with Luther." But peace and harmony were not destined to continue in the German churches. The successful propagation of Melanchthonian doctrines, after Luther's death, stirred up a feeling in the Ultra-Lutherans that their very existence was in jeopardy.<sup>14</sup> They began a well-planned and stubborn contest (1553-1557) for the extirpation of Crypto-Calvinism and the restoration of genuine Lutheranism. The Naumburg Diet of the Princes in 1561 resulted in a permanent division of the evangelical party. The Melanchthonian tendency was suppressed as unsanctioned in the federation of the Augsburg Confession, and in other sections it was forced out of the church. The different tendencies in German protestantism could no longer exist peaceably side by side. They were regarded, not as different phases of one movement which might be tolerated with advantage, but as directly hostile and

<sup>12</sup> *Idem*, I., 253.

<sup>13</sup> Schaff says: "It was expressly approved by the Lutheran princes at the Convention of Naumburg in 1561, after Melanchthon's death, as an improved modification and authentic interpretation of the Confession" ("Ch. Hist.," VII., p. 665).

<sup>14</sup> The Augsburg and the Leipzig Interim (1548) permanently separated the Ultra-Lutherans and the Melanchthonians. The breach was widened by Westphal's writings on the Lord's Supper. In 1559 the Stuttgart Confession was issued as a "full-toned" Lutheran Symbol in distinction from Zwinglianism, Calvinism, and Melanchthonianism. See, also, Ebrard's article in "Tercentenary Monument," pp. 106-109.

mutually exclusive. The continuance of the one meant the death of the other. The polemics against Calvinism became unreasonably bitter. The Lutherans said: "Lieber katholisch als calvinisch." It was seriously questioned whether a Calvinist could be saved or not. The following prayer is still on record: "*Impleat nos Deus odio Calvinismi et Papismi.*"<sup>15</sup>

If the protestantism of Bucer and Capito, of Melanchthon and Calvin, was to be maintained on German territory, it had to separate from Lutheranism and effect an independent organization. Thus the original differences came to be finally embodied in hostile denominations known as the Lutheran and the Reformed Churches.

We shall summarize our conclusions so far as follows: (1) that from the beginning there were two distinct tendencies in German protestantism; (2) that Melanchthon became the leader of a school which was in sympathy with the south Germans, whose most prominent leader was Bucer; (3) that Calvin settled in Strassburg with peculiar views of the sacrament and other aspects of reform, but was on many points in agreement with Melanchthon and with Bucer; (4) that Melanchthon and Calvin, however, differed sufficiently to become leaders of separate schools; (5) that the Ultra-Lutherans began a vigorous propaganda against Phillipism and Calvinism, suppressing and excluding this element from Lutheran territory and churches; (6) that in consequence of this intolerant attitude German states, in order to preserve the Melanchthonian-Bucer spirit, were driven to organize independent churches and to pass over to Calvinism; (7) that these churches did not profess to renounce their former confession, the *Augustana variata*, but to advance beyond and logically complete it;<sup>16</sup> (8) that denominational lines were now sharply drawn and the Lutheran and Reformed Churches in

<sup>15</sup> "Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte," Moeller-Kawerau, III., p. 299.

<sup>16</sup> The Elector Frederick III. wrote in a letter that "his Catechism (the Heidelberg) was based on the Word of God and therefore did not contradict the highly prized Augsburg Confession which was also founded on God's Word" (Kluckhohn's "Briefe," 1868, I., p. 456).

Germany were recognized as separate and antagonistic organizations.

In the light of this preparatory stage we can see why the German Reformed Churches stand out as a distinct type in the Reformed family. They differ from the Reformed Church of France, of Holland, and of Scotland. The differences are due to national characteristics, to the method of approach to Calvinism, to religious leadership, and to doctrinal controversy—all of which factors had a molding influence on doctrine, cultus and polity. While all of them are to be classed as Calvinistic churches, their Calvinism is not the same. They show a marked difference of emphasis and of proportion.

Even the Reformed Churches of Germany are not uniform in doctrine and in polity. This can be accounted for by the way in which the several provinces entered the Calvinistic fold. They may be divided into two classes. First, those which passed directly from Romanism to Calvinism and became thoroughly Calvinistic, accepting not only Reformed doctrine but also the Reformed cultus and the presbyterial polity. They developed a strong individuality and their peculiar type of piety has been preserved in the Evangelical Union to this day. The churches belonging to this class are those of East Friesland, Jülich, Cleve, Berg, Mörs, the Lower Rhine, and the French refugees in Germany who were given the privilege of organizing independent congregations and thus maintained their Calvinistic character. Second, those which passed from Romanism, by way of Lutheranism and Melancthonianism, into Calvinism. These became the more influential Reformed Churches, but were not as consistently Calvinistic as those of the first class. For example, they did not introduce all the elements of Reformed worship or polity. In practical piety, also, they conformed to a large extent to their Lutheran neighbors. They occupy an intermediate position between strict Lutheranism and pure Calvinism. They continued to appeal to the modified Augsburg Confes-

sion<sup>17</sup> and to Luther, but the Lutherans disowned them as deserters and contemptuously called them Calvinists. The churches of this class are those of the Palatinate, Nassau, Bremen, Anhalt, Baden-Durlach, Lippe, Hesse-Cassel, Brandenburg.

Of these the Palatinate Church is typical and normative. In it the south German genius and the Zwinglian, Melancthonian, Lutheran and Calvinistic tendencies were represented, and, it seems, happily united. It passed gradually from Romanism to Calvinism. To it the churches of the Lower Rhine are indebted for their catechism and liturgy.<sup>18</sup> It is also regarded as the Mother of the Reformed Church in the United States. We shall inquire, therefore, to what extent Calvinism shaped its standards and in what respect it is to be distinguished from other branches of the Reformed family.

Historians differ widely in their characterization of the Reformation in the Palatinate. The Lutherans considered the changes introduced by Frederick III, as an apostasy to Calvinism and deplored the step of the devout Elector. Heppe says: "But it belongs to the surest results of historical investigation that the German Evangelical system, which was first established in the Palatinate, did not have its roots in Calvinism but in German Lutheranism, and that it had for its object the conservation of the Melancthonian type of reform which was once dominant in all Germany."<sup>19</sup> Ebrard disagrees with Heppe's favorite theory, and denies that the Melancthonian doctrine, as opposed to the genuine Lutheran, was the more original, "the old protestant one." The Reformation in the Palatinate was, therefore, not a restoration of primitive German protestantism but a transition to a modified form of Calvinism.<sup>20</sup> Goebel speaks of Frederick III's conversion as a

<sup>17</sup> While Karl Müller concedes that the German Reformed Churches of this class continued to adhere to the *Augustana variata*, he still holds that it cannot be considered a Reformed confession ("Symbolik," p. 435).

<sup>18</sup> "Geschichte des christlichen Lebens," Goebel, I., p. 352.

<sup>19</sup> "Geschichte des deutschen Protestantismus," 1555-1581, I., p. 448.

<sup>20</sup> "Tercentenary Monument," pp. 90 and 103.

change from "Lutheran-Melanchthonianism to Melanchthonian-Calvinism." Two citations from historians still living are of special interest. Kawerau, the reviser of Moeller's "Church History," Vol. III., says: "A number of Lutheran provincial churches passed over to Calvin, which transition they did not regard a change of confession but a logical completion of the Reformation of Luther." Karl Müller says: "The character of the German Reformed Churches differs in a measure from strict Calvinism and is not in itself uniform."

The question of the proportion of Calvinism in this Church must be answered by a comparative study of the standards of Geneva and of the Palatinate—the catechisms, liturgies and church orders.<sup>21</sup> We shall, therefore, so far as space allows us, attempt a comparison in order to show points of agreement as well as of difference.

I. *Catechisms*.—In comparing Calvin's catechism and the Heidelberg we find that they have in common certain characteristics of the Reformed type of catechisms. With the exception of Capito's works, these were prepared in the interim between Luther's smaller catechism and the Heidelberg, and may be grouped as follows: the catechisms (1) of Strassburg and Upper Germany, (2) of Zurich, (3) of Geneva, (4) of Lasko and Micronius.<sup>22</sup> One can trace a gradual development in the art of making catechisms. The division of the material into five main parts, relating to the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Commandments, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper respectively, was taken by Bucer from Luther's smaller catechism, and generally followed in the Reformed Churches. The catechisms, however, differ from those of the Lutherans in detail, as for example the numbering of the Ten Commandments, the phraseology of the Lord's Prayer, and the order of arrange-

<sup>21</sup> The following documents were the result of Frederick III's transition to Calvinism: *Catechismus* (1563), *Eheordnung* (July, 1563), *Kirchenordnung* (November, 1563), *Kirchenrathsordnung* (1564), und das *Edict über Kirchendisziplin* (1570).

<sup>22</sup> "Der Heidelberger Katechismus," A. Lang, p. viii.

ment of the principal parts. The earlier catechisms were cumbersome and impractical. They lacked the confessional element. The material of some was not arranged in the form of questions and answers. In others the pupil is supposed to ask the question and the teacher to answer it. The speculative, theological, and at times the polemical elements bulked so large that they were not suitable for the instruction of youth. Bucer simplified the contents, eliminated the speculative material, and limited himself to distinctively religious truth. In his catechism, for example, there is not a word about predestination, though he himself was a predestinarian. He introduced and frequently reiterated the personal and experimental question "What then does this profit thee?" or, "What are you to learn by this?" In the earlier catechisms no attempt is made to unite the main divisions in a logical way. They are loosely conjoined. Both in the Genevan and in the Heidelberg the organic relation of the several parts is clearly shown in the introductory answers. For the exposition of the Commandments in the second part of the catechism we are indebted to Calvin. In the Heidelberg they are expounded in the third part. Ursinus gives the reason for this mode of procedure, saying: "The Decalogue belongs to the first part so far as it is a mirror of our sins and misery; but also to the third part as being the rule of our new obedience and Christian life." The Office of the Keys, or the necessity of excluding the unworthy from communion by a process of discipline, is explained in the last answer of Calvin's catechism, and is given a prominent place in the Heidelberg (Ques. 83-85).<sup>23</sup> The ob-

<sup>23</sup> The change in the theory of discipline becomes clear by comparison with the Liturgy of Otho Henry (1556), which was in use in the Palatinate before the Heidelberg Catechism, and is of a moderate Lutheran type. In its Catechism the question, "Welchs seind die schlüssel des himmelreichs?" is answered thus: "Das Predigtamt des Evangelions von Jesu Christo." The Heidelberg, "What is the Office of the Keys?" Ans. "The Preaching of the Holy Gospel and *Church Discipline*; by which *two* things, the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers and shut against unbelievers." The Calvinistic addition is "and *Church Discipline*." In the 85th answer this term is defined.

jection to the use of graven images and pictures in worship is found in both catechisms in the exposition of the Second Commandment.<sup>24</sup> The doctrine of the Lord's Supper is substantially the same in both.<sup>25</sup>

Though we may concede that in the main the Heidelberg is a Calvinistic symbol and that for its form and contents it is largely indebted to the Genevan Reformer, it cannot be granted that it is a mere replica of his catechism, or in full accord with his "Institutes." Gooszen contends that Bullinger's influence is predominant. Heppie regards it as Melancthonian. Max Goebel says: "The Heidelberg Catechism may in the true sense of the term be considered the flower and fruit of the whole German and French Reformation. It has Lutheran inwardness, Melancthonian clearness, Zwinglian simplicity, and Calvinistic fire, harmoniously blended." Dr. Nevin says: "Substantially Calvinistic as the Heidelberg Catechism is, however in its doctrine of the sacraments it has carefully refrained from committing itself in like manner to Calvin's doctrine of the decrees."

The differences, as well as the points of agreement, will appear by a comparison of the salient characteristics of the two catechisms. In the Genevan there are 373 questions and answers.<sup>26</sup> Its purpose is the instruction of the youth by the minister in the church, the teacher in the schools, and the

<sup>24</sup> In reference to Ques. 98 a critic of the Heidelberg, in "Verzeichniss der Mängel" published soon after the Catechism, says: "Pag. 66 ist der Catechismus auch ein bildstürmer dan er sagt die bilder moegan als der leien bucher in der kirchen nicht geduldet werden."

<sup>25</sup> "Der Heidelberger Katechismus in seiner ursprünglichen Gestalt," von Albrecht Wolters, 1864. In this book is found also a criticism of the catechism by a contemporary Lutheran, entitled, "Verzeichniss der Mängel," in which the following is affirmed (p. 181): "Man verstreiche es wie mans koenne so ist er (der Catechismus) vor der geburt und nach der geburt zwinglich, und wil schlecht den leib und das blutt Christi nit wahrhaftig und wesentlich in dem nachtmal gegenwertig sein lassen." Ever since there have been men who have considered the doctrine of the sacrament in the Heidelberg as Zwinglian. This is, however, not tenable.

<sup>26</sup> "Der Genfer Katechismus von 1545," in "Die Bekenntnisschriften der reformirten Kirche," E. F. Karl Müller.



parents in the family. The questions are often longer than the answers; in fact the answer is at times included in the question. Then the pupil simply assents to the statement of the minister saying: "Ita ut dicis," or "sic sentio," or "ita res habet." Many of the questions are impersonal and theoretic, so that they might be asked with more fitness of a student of theology than of a catechumen preparing for an intelligent profession of faith in Jesus Christ. The introductory questions will illustrate this point: "What is the chief end of human life?" "What reason have you for affirming this?" "What is man's highest good?" "Why do you hold this to be the highest good?" Thus Socrates might have taught his disciples philosophy; but for catechetical purposes the method is too general and doctrinal, not personal, experimental and confessional. The contents are presumably to be comprehended by an intellectual process, not by the experience of faith.

The Heidelberg has one hundred and twenty-nine questions and answers.<sup>27</sup> Its purpose, as defined in the *Vorred* of the first edition, is not only the instruction of the youth in the churches and schools in Christian doctrine, but also to furnish the preachers and teachers a certain fixed form and standard by which they may be guided in teaching the young, and not follow their changeable fancies or introduce objectionable doctrine. There is a marked improvement on the Genevan in the form of the questions and answers. They are simpler, briefer, more rhythmical and compact. The catechumen is addressed directly in the second person, "thy," "thee." The answers are given in the first person, "I," or "we." Contrast this method with that of Calvin and you will find that the Heidelberg is conceived from a different point of view, has a different method of imparting religious truth, and regards the catechumen as occupying a different

<sup>27</sup> "Der Heidelberger Katechismus," von Wolters. Also, "The Heidelberg Catechism in German, Latin and English: with an Historical Introduction," by J. W. Nevin, tercentenary edition, 1863.

position in the Kingdom of Grace.<sup>28</sup> The appeal is made to his personal experience in Christ Jesus, which is the product of perennial fellowship with Him in His Church from childhood. Under the guidance of the minister this experience comes to fruition and finds appropriate expression in the language of the catechism. The youth, therefore, is not discussing theological problems with his instructor, nor is he taking a course in theology, all of which at the proper time is legitimate; but according to the catechism he now relates the great facts of Christian revelation, as he has comprehended them by faith, to his personal salvation. From them he draws comfort, assurance, inspiration, strength, hope and guidance.

The Genevan is divided into four parts which are outlined in Ques. 7: "In what way is God to be rightly honored?" Ans. "By our reposing in Him our whole trust (the Creed); by our endeavoring to devote our life to Him in obeying His Will (the Decalogue); by our calling upon Him as we are in any need, seeking safety in Him and all desirable good (Lord's Prayer); and finally by acknowledging Him both with heart and mouth to be the sole Author of all good things (the Word and the Sacraments)." It at once appears that this question is theoretical and lacks the personal note. The answer sets forth a scheme of doctrine according to which we are to shape our life, and the main parts are used to expound a theological system rather than to interpret and ripen Christian experience.

Compare with this the three-fold division of the Heidelberg, summarized in Ques. 2: "How many things are necessary for thee to know, that thou in this comfort mayest live and die happily?" Ans. "Three things: First, the greatness of my sin and misery. Second, how I am redeemed from all my sins and misery. Third, how I am to be thankful to God for such redemption"—sin, salvation, thanksgiving. The outline follows the divisions of the Epistle to the Romans. It repro-

<sup>28</sup> "Das Pfälzer Lehrbuch will nicht im Gegensatz zum Calvinismus verstanden sein; und doch ist alles in ihm allseitiger, freier, weniger von Zeitvorstellungen geleitet und inniger in das Zentrum der göttlichen Heilsoffenbarung hineingetrückt" (A. Lang, "Der Heid. Cat.," p. ciii).

duces the historical order of Christian experience in every age, and is soteriological rather than theological. Thus the parts of the catechism are genetically related, bound together by the logic of life. Its contents cannot be comprehended by an intellectual process, nor be taught as abstract propositions. The whole scheme of the book is experimental and confessional. "It is a representation," says Dr. Nevin, "rather of the great facts of religion in their own living and concrete form, so ordered as to address itself continually to the believing contemplation of heart and soul."<sup>29</sup>

On the doctrine of election we find the following statements in the catechisms: The Genevan, Ques. 93: "What is the Church?" Ans.: "The body and community of believers whom God has predestined to eternal life." Ques. 96: "In what sense do you call the Church holy?" Ans.: "Because those whom God hath chosen He justifieth," etc. Ques. 100: "Can this Church be known other than by faith?" Ans.: "The Church is indeed also visible and marked by definite signs and notes, but here reference is primarily made to the congregation of those whom God has adopted by His secret election unto salvation"—"*quos arcana sua electione adoptavit in salutem.*"

It is evident that a *predestinatio gemina*, the predestination of some to eternal life and of others to eternal punishment, is not taught directly in the catechism. Calvin, however, leaves us in no doubt on this question in the "Institutes" where he says: "Predestination we call the eternal decree of God by which He has determined in Himself what He would have to become of every individual of mankind. For they are not all created with a similar destiny, but eternal life is foreordained for some and eternal damnation for others" (III, 21, 5). From the statements we have cited it is clear that only the decree of election is taught in the catechism. Nothing is said about the decree of reprobation; yet the doctrine of election is so stated that the doctrine of reprobation

<sup>29</sup> "The Tercentenary Heid. Cat.," p. 92.

is necessarily implied. The reason for the omission of the latter doctrine may be found in Calvin's preface to Melancthon's *Loci*, translated into French, in which he says: "With predestination he goes about thus. To avoid all unprofitable inquisitiveness the author has presented only that which it is absolutely necessary to know. The rest he leaves in darkness because he expects no results for the inner life in such explanations and discussions."<sup>30</sup> A similar motive doubtless constrained Calvin to keep the doctrine of a double predestination out of the catechism, and yet so to formulate the doctrine of election that the ultimate ground of salvation is not the believer's fellowship with Christ, but an eternal decree, accepted as an article of faith, apart from the historical Jesus though realized through Him. The church does not bring election to men; the election constructs the church out of the elect.

The Heidelberg is much more reserved on the doctrine of the decrees, which is especially remarkable because both its authors, Olevianus and Ursinus, were Calvinists. The following questions are said to teach election and to contain predestinarian doctrine. Ques. 27: Providence is defined to be "the Almighty and everywhere present power of God whereby as it were by His hands He still upholds heaven and earth, with all creatures, and so governs them that . . . all things come not by chance but by His fatherly hand." Ques. 1, in explanation of the name of Christ, says: "He is ordained of God the Father and anointed with the Holy Ghost to be our chief prophet," etc. Ques. 52, relating to the second advent of Christ, says: "He will take me with all His chosen ones (*cum omnibus electis*) to Himself unto heavenly joy and glory." Ques. 54 says: "Out of the whole human race from the beginning to the end of the world the Son of God, by His Word and Spirit, gathers, defends and preserves for Himself unto everlasting life, a chosen communion

<sup>30</sup> Stäbelin's "Calvin," I., p. 243.

(*cœtum ad vitam æternam electum*), and that I am and forever shall remain a living member of the same."<sup>31</sup>

These statements are far less positive in reference to predestination than those in the Genevan catechism. In fact all who have studied the Heidelberg have claimed to find in it the Calvinistic doctrine of election only by implication and inference. No one could deny that it teaches the sovereignty of God in realizing the eternal purpose of His creation; but not by an arbitrary decree which overrides the freedom of the creature and destroys human responsibility. In the doctrine of sovereign grace the catechism is in agreement not only with Calvin but with the Bible and with all protestantism. There is, however, a wide difference between the sovereignty of God, which is a religious truth that all Christians accept, and the speculative inference of the *decretum horribile*. The doctrine of a double predestination is a philosophical deduction to account for the fact that the gospel is accepted by some and rejected by others; it is not an original idea of faith necessary to religious life. It is significant, indeed, that it is not found in the first edition of the "Institutes."

The 54th question is usually cited as an indubitable statement of the Calvinistic doctrine of election. Ursinus in his commentary on the Catechism discusses the whole question of predestination in his exposition of this answer. It must be remembered, however, that the activity of Christ by which He gathers a chosen communion, is throughout historical; there is no hint that He is merely executing in time an abstract eternal decree by which some have been elected and others rejected. The words "*electum cœtum*" refer to the church collectively, as a body called out and separated from the world; not to select individuals scattered over the earth and waiting to be gathered by Christ who lived and died for them only. The assurance of being and remaining a member of the church

<sup>31</sup> Thelemann finds the doctrine of election directly or indirectly in Quæst. 1, 8, 20, 26, 28, 52, 53, 54, 65 ("An Aid to the Heid. Catechism," Eng. trans., 218).

is not based on the metaphysical notion of election but on the believer's fellowship with Christ and the certainty of present vital union with Him.

By a comparative view of the general scheme of the catechism, perhaps as much as by detailed analysis, its peculiar doctrinal positions must be understood. In general it is Calvinistic and not Arminian. The Augustinian doctrine of sin and grace is held over against Pelagianism. The depravity and helplessness of the race through the fall are clearly affirmed. Neither the race nor the individual has ability to recover itself from this lost condition. The fall is traced to a concrete historical fact—the disobedience of our first parents. It is generic, involving all men; not, as in the Pelagian view, merely the individual. The origin of sin is not referred to a metaphysical mystery beyond the scope of historical revelation but to a definite act of man.

Man's salvation is attributed absolutely to the free and unmerited grace of God in Jesus Christ. The starting point is not in the divine sovereignty or in the eternal abstract will of God as metaphysically apprehended, but in Jesus Christ. He freely offers Himself a propitiatory sacrifice for all men. The catechism steers clear of synergism and Arminianism. It does not limit the atonement to the elect. As the fall is organic so is redemption. Yet the redemption wrought out by Christ inures to the salvation only of those who are born again and are made partakers of His life by the Holy Ghost. The subjective condition by which men become partakers of Christian redemption is faith. This involves not only assent to a doctrine or belief in a decree, but "a living apprehension of the whole perennial fact of Christianity as embodied in the Apostle's Creed." Faith itself is not a product of the human will but of the Holy Ghost who "works it in our hearts by the preaching of the Gospel and confirms it by the use of the sacraments." We find here, then, the substantial and positive elements of the Calvinistic system, at least under some of its aspects; but the subject is treated rather Christo-

logically than theologically, and the metaphysical questions pertaining to the sovereignty of God in relation to the human will are not brought forth.<sup>22</sup>

The most recent critical analysis and comparative estimate of the catechism has been made by A. Lang in a work entitled, "*Der Heid. Katechismus und vier verwandte Katechismen*," 1907. In the last pages of the Introduction he assigns the catechism its proper place in protestantism. We shall freely reproduce his statements. It is the rich, ripe product not only of Calvinism, but of influences which came from all the earlier Reformed catechisms, as well as from those of the German Lutheran Reformation. The Heidelberg is simplified, clarified, and made more practical. In it the religious and the ethical elements are separated from the theological, in spite of certain oversights, far more sharply than in any preceding catechism. It speaks to the heart more directly and reaches into life far more practically than either Calvin's or Bullinger's catechism. Not so much in a dogmatic tendency, but in the wealth of its contents, in the biblical purity of its religious and ethical motives, does the difference between the Heidelberg and the Genevan catechisms appear. The Heidelberg clearly shows a closer approach to the German Lutheran Reformation. This is affirmed not so much on account of the doctrine of the sacraments or of the remnants of Melancthonianism in the catechism, but especially on account of the first two parts of the outline and the Christocentric tendencies according to which the Christian's only comfort is based, not so much on knowledge or on the covenant of God, as on the one offering of Christ on the cross. This is, of course, not an actual dogmatic difference from Calvin, but indeed a difference of tendency and of original religious feeling.

On account of these various qualities the catechism has obtained a certain ecumenical character within Reformed

<sup>22</sup> See "Report of Proceedings of the Second General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance," Philadelphia, 1880; paper on "The Theology of the German Reformed Church" by Dr. Thos. G. Apple, p. 484.



protestantism. A broad bridge leads from the Heidelberg to the Lutheran sister confession. Within the Reformed Church theologians have based on it different theological systems (Voetius, Coccejus), and developed various religious tendencies (orthodoxy and pietism). This ecumenicity is based on the fact that the Heidelberg, leaning on the earlier Reformed catechisms, combines the deepest and most efficient religious and ethical motives of Reformed protestantism, especially of its most important though not only branch, Calvinism, and presents them in biblical simplicity and purity.

II. *Liturgies.*—The first steps toward a reform of worship were taken by the Elector immediately after the Heidelberg Colloquy (1560), in which the doctrine of the Lord's Supper was the subject of discussion between the Saxon and the Palatine theologians. The former, however, failed to convert Frederick to their views and he issued a decree, August 12, 1560, that all the clergy of the province, who would not conform to Melancthon's doctrine of the Sacrament, should immediately vacate their places. The Elector now turned toward Calvinism and gave evidence of his transition by a conformation of worship to Reformed models. He was, however, not a servile follower of any party or school as will appear from a declaration he made to three German princes who urged him to retract Calvinism and return into the communion of the Evangelical Estates of the Empire (April 6, 1563). He replied that he would suffer neither the word of Luther nor of Calvin to be acknowledged in his church, but the word of Christ alone. Still under the guidance of the Bible and of his theologians he reached many of Calvin's conclusions. He ordered the removal of the remnants of Catholicism, which in his mind were a species of idolatry, from the churches. This meant the exclusion of altars, crucifixes, pictures, hosts, chalices, consecrated baptismal fonts, Latin hymns, organs (which were not again used for worship in the Palatinate till 1667), and the festivals of the Virgin and the saints. In place of these he introduced tables, bread, the cup,

baptismal bowls, and German psalms, without, however, giving up German Lutheran hymns. Heppe, while claiming that the catechism contained Melancthonian doctrines to a hair, still acknowledges that the worship and ecclesiastical usages of the Palatinate became thoroughly Calvinistic.<sup>33</sup>

These changes were made before the Heidelberg Catechism was published. After its publication it became necessary to prepare a liturgy which embodied its peculiar genius and doctrines. The sources used in the preparation of this work were the Church Order of Lasko (drawn from Calvin's Liturgy of Strassburg, and in a modified form known as the Netherland Liturgy), the Genevan Liturgy, the Order of the Evangelical Church in France, with slight traces of the Nuremberg Church Order, and of the Saxon Agende (1539).<sup>34</sup>

Many of the forms of prayer were taken verbatim either from the Netherland or from the Genevan Liturgy. Both are Calvinistic in spirit. We shall simply enumerate the portions taken from these two main sources. From the Netherland Liturgy: first, the baptismal service as a whole, with some additions; second, the form of the administration of the Lord's Supper verbatim; third, the prayer following the afternoon sermon; fourth, the prayer for A Day of Prayer in abridged form; fifth, the morning and evening prayer; sixth, the form of marriage. From the Genevan Liturgy: first, the exhortation to prayer (Calvin used it as a "bidding prayer" in his daily lectures); second, the prayer before the sermon (Beza offered it at the Colloquy of Poissy (1561) where it called forth so much admiration); third, the intercessory prayer after the sermon; fourth, the form for the visitation of the sick; fifth, prayer for the dying; sixth, directions for discipline, concluding the form for the Lord's Supper.

The greater portion of the material is evidently taken from the Netherland and Genevan formulas. Ebrard says the

<sup>33</sup> *Mercersburg Review*, 1853, pp. 192-193.

<sup>34</sup> "Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des 16ten Jhdts.," Richter, II., p. 257.

Palatinate Liturgy is at bottom only a remodelling of the Netherland Liturgy. Its Calvinistic origin explains an important peculiarity, namely its somewhat heavy, stiff, didactic feature and its deficiency in the liturgical glow and devotional warmth. In these features it differs in a marked degree from the spirit of the Heidelberg Catechism, as all acknowledge, just as the rigid Calvinistic scholasticism of the so-called Commentary of Ursinus differs from the free, warm, practical, devotional fervor of the catechism itself. Hence, even in the Palatinate, it has long since gone out of use as having the radical defect which characterizes all liturgies produced from the standpoint and in the spirit of the old Calvinism.<sup>35</sup>

As in the catechism, so in the liturgy there are traces of customs and usages which are peculiar to the Reformed Church of South Germany, and which differentiate it from the Genevan and other Reformed Churches. There is no room made for free prayer which was first introduced in Geneva by Farel and accepted by Calvin.<sup>36</sup> The forms for confession and the declaration of pardon are placed after the sermon. In the Order of Geneva there is no formal declaration of

<sup>35</sup> "Tercenary Monument," art. on "Creed and Cultus," by Henry Harbaugh, pp. 237-238.

<sup>36</sup> In his description of worship in the Reformed Churches of the Lower Rhine in the seventeenth century Goebel says: "Free prayers were, therefore, in the beginning not at all permitted; and were allowed later in consequence of the introduction of Labadism since 1677, when the Synod of Cleves resolved that 'for the better edification and comfort of the ignorant, the customary formularies shall on ordinary occasions be used; still freedom shall be allowed, at special times and occasions, to add some things to the ordinary prayers, or even to form other prayers, agreeing with the Scriptures and the matter of the prescribed forms.' The General Synod held the same year (1677) accepted this action, provided, however, 'That the customary formularies be not thereby contemptuously set aside.' Nevertheless in consequence of this permission, the custom and caprice of free prayer began to prevail to such an extent in the following century, that the prescribed liturgical prayers were gradually altogether dislodged" ("*Geschichte des Christlichen Lebens*," II, pp. 121-122). On the use of liturgical prayers in Reformed Churches of other lands see Harbaugh's article on "Creed and Cultus" in "Tercenary Monument," pp. 282-285.

pardon. It is resolved into a petition for divine compassion in the opening prayer.<sup>37</sup> The German hymns were used in the Palatinate, while in Geneva the Psalms alone, with the exception of two or three ancient chants, were used. The preparatory service for the communion is to be held on the previous Saturday. Its chief feature is a sermon, followed by three questions based on the three divisions of the catechism, and addressed to the congregation, who answer audibly "Yes."<sup>38</sup> There is no provision made for this service by Calvin. In place of it he recommends that persons intending to approach the Lord's table shall call upon their pastor, before the celebration of the sacraments, for the purpose of receiving spiritual instruction and counsel.<sup>39</sup> In the Palatinate the Lord's Supper is to be observed at least every month in the cities, every two months in the villages, and in both on Easter, Whitsunday, and Christmas, and as much oftener as the necessities of the congregation may require. In Geneva a tri-monthly celebration in each parish is required. On Easter, Pentecost and Christmas the communion shall be administered in all the churches in such a way, however, that in the months in which those festivals occur it shall not be repeated.<sup>40</sup> In the first edition of the Palatinate liturgy the pericopal system is not maintained. It is directed that "the books of the New Testament, which are most profitable to the common people, and most edifying to the churches, are in preference presented and explained on Sunday."<sup>41</sup> In the edition of 1585, however, there is a closer approach to the common German usage of the pericopes in the Sunday service. "Otherwise, generally, the Sunday Gospels, as they are called, shall remain. Still the people shall be reminded what the Gospel is, and that the same is to be found in Paul no less than in the Evangelists." Calvin, on the other hand, opposed the pericopes. He de-

<sup>37</sup> "Codex Liturgicus," Daniel, III., p. 55.

<sup>38</sup> Richter, "K. O.," II., p. 261.

<sup>39</sup> "Codex Liturg.," Daniel, III., p. 157.

<sup>40</sup> "Ecclesiastical Ordinances."

<sup>41</sup> Richter, "K. O.," II., p. 258.

clared them to have been selected "*inepte nulloque judicio*."<sup>42</sup> The church-year was not at first retained in Geneva. "In the time of the Reformation," says Dr. Herzog, "the great Christian festivals were everywhere retained in Switzerland except in Geneva, where, however, the solemn observance was soon again restored."

There was apparently a more radical tendency in the reformation of worship in Geneva than in Heidelberg. This is traceable more to the influence of Farel than of Calvin. It was followed by the Scotch Presbyterians and the English Puritans. The trend in South Germany and in Switzerland generally was toward a restoration of the church-year, the use of the pericopes, and the liturgical forms. Alt says, in reference to the common practice of the Swiss and German Reformed Churches: "Besides this, it is to be noticed that already the older liturgies in regard to the liturgical prayers for the single Sundays distinguished the seasons of Epiphany, the Passion, Easter, Whitsuntide, and the last one from the fall communion to Christmas. To this must be added the practice introduced at a later period of celebrating the four weeks before Christmas as the advent season, and of beginning a new church-year with the first Sunday of Advent."<sup>43</sup>

III. *Organization and Discipline*.—After the adoption of the catechism and the liturgy, a new form of church government and discipline was introduced. The Elector did not at first favor the Calvinistic polity. In the liturgy (Nov., 1563) he contented himself partly with a statement of principles and partly with promises, neither of which were at once put into practice. At the instigation of Olevianus, who wrote to Geneva for Calvin's Church Order, he made room in the liturgy for the function of elders, without, however, using the name, at the conclusion of the form for the holy communion where the necessity of discipline is explained. "Therefore, in every community several honorable and God-fearing men

<sup>42</sup> "Die Evangelischen Perikopen," Nebe, I., p. 53.

<sup>43</sup> "Das Kirchen-Jahr," p. 456.

shall be selected out of the congregation, who shall act for the sake, and in the name of, the congregation." The meaning of discipline is also taught in Questions 83-85 of the catechism. The unworthy are referred "to the Church or its proper officers, and if they neglect to hear them also, are by them excluded from the Holy Sacraments." Neither in the catechism nor in the liturgy is the title of "elder" used. This is all the more significant since the office and the name are found in the Ecclesiastical Ordinances, 1543, and in the last answer of the Genevan Catechism.

A step in advance was taken in the *Kirchenrathsordnung*, 1564.<sup>44</sup> It was prepared by Christopher Ehem, and is the first example of a consistorial organization in the Reformed Church. It rests on the presupposition that the prince is to superintend and provide for the spiritual and ecclesiastical training of his people. The Consistory was composed of six persons, three "*Theo'ogis*" and three "*Politiciis*." They were appointed by the Elector and had the general oversight of the churches in the province. They procured trustworthy ministers for congregations and teachers for schools. They had supervision of the doctrine and life of these officers, and oversight of the morals and discipline in the churches. They had authority to admonish and to excommunicate. Only in important cases did the Elector reserve the right of final decision. Each district was under the special control of an inspector or superintendent. He was practically the representative of the General Consistory or *Kirchenrath* and performed its functions in the district assigned him. What the *Kirchenrath* was for the whole realm, the inspector was in the particular district. Synods, composed of preachers and two lay and two ministerial delegates of the *Kirchenrath*, were held annually. The general work of the churches was reviewed and discussed, as for example, matters relating to doctrine, cultus, morality, officers in congregations and schools, alms, and church polity. The General Synod consisted of

<sup>44</sup> Richter, "K. O." II., p. 276.

all the inspectors assembled at Heidelberg and met at the direction of the *Kirchenrath*.

A sharp controversy arose in reference to congregational Presbyteries (Consistories). Olevianus was the champion of this distinctively Calvinistic judicatory. In it was to be vested the power of discipline in the congregation. It was vigorously opposed by the Swiss Erastus, who denied that there were biblical sanctions for the practice of excommunication. Others conceded the theoretical value of the Presbytery, but held it impracticable in the Palatinate. The Elector finally yielded to Olevianus and issued a decree (July 13, 1570) ordering a Presbytery in every congregation. The members of this judicatory were not elected by the congregation but appointed by the *Kirchenrath* and served for life.

After 1580 the completed church organization of the Palatinate included the following judicatories and officers: (1) The Presbytery (our Consistory), with the pastor as president, charged with the oversight of the internal and external affairs of the congregation and the exercise of discipline including the right of excommunication; (2) the *Kirchenrath*, located at Heidelberg, having the general superintendency of all the churches and controlled by the Elector; (3) the district superintendents or inspectors, who mediated between the congregational presbyteries and the *Kirchenrath* and may be called the assistants of the latter; (4) the District and the General Synod.<sup>45</sup>

The government was not purely Calvinistic or presbyterial. It was a combination of the German consistorial and the Genevan presbyterial polity. The congregations did indeed have the essential element of the Calvinistic polity, namely the Presbytery, but the people were still deprived of the prerogative of choosing the members of the Presbytery and the ultimate authority was vested in the prince. Calvin, however, could not even in Geneva realize his ideal of congregational

<sup>45</sup> "Geschichte der Presbyterial- und Synodalverfassung seit der Reformation," von G. W. Lechler, 1854, pp. 110-126.



organization. He, too, had to compromise in a measure with the city council. In France where the Huguenots organized without civil authority, and in the congregations of refugees in Frankfort, Strassburg and London, where they were granted the privilege of organizing according to their personal preference, do we find the most consistent application of Calvin's principles of government and discipline. In the Lower Rhine provinces this polity was more closely followed than in the Palatinate. In general, however, there was an element in the German character which resented the strict discipline of Geneva and never accepted the puritanic and legalistic ideals which usually come in the wake of Calvinism.

After this somewhat extended survey of the origin and the formularies of the Reformed Churches in Germany, particularly of the Church of the Palatinate, we submit the following summary of results:

1. The first stage of German protestantism was a general evangelical movement shaped and colored in different sections by the personalities of the reformers and by political and racial characteristics. The Reformed Churches in distinction from the Lutheran, were not organized until the second generation. While they were indebted to the genius of Luther, their leaders were more than his forerunners or his epigones. They made original contributions, and were indispensable, to the development of the protestant system.

2. The churches of Reformed protestantism may be divided into four classes or families: The Zwinglian, the Calvinistic, the Anglican, and the German. They are animated by a common spirit so as to belong to one group as over against the Lutherans. They are divided by differences in doctrine, cultus, and polity so as to have a genius of their own and to represent distinct personalities in the same religious household.

3. Calvinism as expounded in Geneva was probably nowhere adopted without modification and adaptation to surrounding political, social and religious conditions. It had a molding influence on all the Reformed Churches; yet in

some, as in France and in Scotland, it was more nearly accepted in its entirety, while in others, as in Germany, it was adopted only in a partial or a modified form. Thus, in time, Calvinism came to mean something different in different lands. In Germany, in the sixteenth century, it stood for a theory of the sacraments in distinction from that of Luther and of Zwingli. In this conception of it emphasis is put on the church as an historical institution by whose ordinances and sacraments the gift of salvation is mediated to the members. This theory of the method of imparting and appropriating the blessings of redemption had a formative influence on doctrine, worship and organization of the Reformed Churches of Germany, especially of the Palatinate. In Holland (Synod of Dort, 1619) and in Great Britain (Westminster Confession, 1647) Calvinism meant a theological system in which the doctrine of the decrees was the ruling principle. The gift of salvation, in this view, is not conveyed to men through the historical and organized medium of the church, but by the absolute, unmediated will of God. The individual is separated from historic relations and brought into immediate and unmediated dependence on the Divine will. Calvinism of this type tends toward an unchurchly, unsacramental, unliturgical, subjective and legalistic form of Christianity. The Reformed Churches in Germany, accordingly, originating under peculiar circumstances and conditioned by other elements and relations, had a character of their own and were not simply an imitation of the Helvetic, Gallican, Belgic and Scotch Churches.

4. Even the German Reformed Churches did not agree in their Calvinism. Some adopted the Genevan system more consistently and more thoroughly than others. The Palatinate Church, as may be seen by a comparative study of its standards, was the product of a blending of the Bucer, Melancthonian, and Calvinistic tendencies. Yet that these were controlled and combined by a common principle superior to any one of them, may be inferred from the unique genius of

the South Germans, from the dominating minds of the movement, and from the catechism, liturgy and church order. These original differences are still discernible in the character of the German Reformed Churches, some of which have conformed more and more strictly to the Calvinism of the churches beyond Germany, accepting even double predestination and rigid puritanism. Others conserved the chirstological and sacramental spirit of the Heidelberg Catechism and in their life, custom, and piety are not so far removed from the surrounding Lutherans of the Melancthonian School, though they still have a distinctly Reformed consciousness. A third class has lost altogether its Calvinistic features and has been absorbed in the Evangelistic Union.

This fact should be borne in mind when we, as members of the Reformed Church in the United States, seek our spiritual ancestry in the German Reformed Churches to-day. To which branch we shall ally ourselves and which we shall regard the legitimate offspring of the sixteenth century, depends largely on our previous training and personal preferences.

5. All the reformation churches have been affected to a greater or less extent by the history of the last four centuries. They could not stand aloof from, and remain untouched by, confessionalism, pietism, rationalism, romanticism, criticism, mediationalism, and liberalism. These movements have left their impress in the way of readjustment, reaction, modification, or radical revision. The churches at present have their schools and parties, most of them professing loyalty to the fathers and yet none of them is a mere photograph of the original. The attempt at restoration is, indeed, futile. The way of loyalty to the past, of spiritual progress, of solving problems, and of transforming the world, is not by reaction, revolution, or desertion, but by action, evolution, and coöperation under the guidance of the glorified Christ, ever-living and ever-present in His church.

6. The unique place of the Reformed Church in the United States, in American protestantism and among the Calvinistic

churches, must be explained by reference to the characteristics of the original German Reformed Churches and their development during the intervening centuries. The schools of thought and the theological controversies which have existed, and in a measure still exist, in this denomination in America have had their counterpart in the Mother Church in Europe. The German and Swiss pioneers had so strong a denominational consciousness that in spite of almost insuperable difficulties they have clung together in a distinct Christian organization and have resisted absorption by larger and allied bodies. They lived for their catechism, worship, and religious customs. To show how the sense of distinctness from other Reformed and Presbyterian Churches was a powerful motive in the men of the last generation we shall quote the words of two acknowledged leaders. In a sermon before the alumni of the Mercersburg Theological Seminary, delivered at Reading in 1856, Dr. J. H. A. Bomberger said:

"Let us have it fairly understood, therefore, that it is not to Saybrook-platform Protestantism that we have plighted our faith and service, nor to the Protestantism of Hartford, Princeton, or New Brunswick, but to that form of it which is distinctly laid down in the standards already alluded to, and which may be easily ascertained by every candid inquirer. . . . As a Church, therefore, or as an integral portion of the Evangelical Church we have not only a right to maintain our distinctive character, but we are placed by Providence under special obligations to do so. We are not German Presbyterians, as we are sometimes called. There would be far more propriety in the Presbyterian Church calling itself English Reformed. The title Presbyterian relates to a comparatively unimportant characteristic of the true Church. But we are German Reformed. The strong tendency of the more earnest theology of all the evangelical churches is towards those principles on which the German Reformed Church was originally founded, and for which she has from the first contended. This is the case, with reference to what are usually

styled the five distinctive points of Calvinism. The preaching of our day savors far less of the Institutes of Calvin, of the canons of Dort, or of the Westminster Confession, in reference to these points, than the mild, conciliatory, declarations of the Heidelberg Catechism. And so of the Sacraments."

These words are quoted with approval in an article in the *Mercersburg Review*, July, 1872, by Dr. Thomas G. Apple, who adds:

"These Puritan and Presbyterian Confessions, including the Canons of Dort, are certainly a one-sided expression of the old Reformed faith, as expressed in so rich and catholic a spirit in the Heidelberg Catechism.

"The subject which we have considered, may serve to throw light on our relation to the Calvinistic churches around us. We have much in common with the Presbyterian and the Dutch Reformed Church. But it is clear that our own doctrinal position is more comprehensive than theirs, and better adapted to form a basis of union for the branches of the Reformed Church than theirs. Especially is there much in the history of both denominations to bind us to the Dutch Reformed Church. But we would consider it a great calamity, if we should think for a moment of giving up our broad, catholic position, for one that would give a one-sided expression of the old Reformed faith and life. Nothing would be gained, but much lost, by yielding to a temptation to gain some outward advantage, while at the same time we should surrender any of our internal strength of position."

LANCASTER, PA.

## IX.

### ILLUSTRATIVE ANECDOTES FROM THE LIFE OF CALVIN.

BY REV. VICTOR WILLIAM DIPPELL, PH.D.

A man's self is often bodied forth in an anecdote more fully than in pages of a biography. The following incidents have been gathered and thus loosely strung together with this idea in mind. A life so rich and varied offers almost limitless stories; but these may suffice.

Calvin says: "When I was yet a little boy, my father destined me to theology, and even as David was taken from the sheep-folds to a high position, so have I, by the hand of God, from a small beginning, been exalted to this high office, and become a herald of the gospel."

. . . . .

Of his teaching he once said: "Although in my fear I fled the world, there gathered thirsting souls about me, the inexperienced recruit, so that each obscure corner was turned into a public school."

. . . . .

In days of great persecution and danger of death such words as these were heard from his lips: "It is not worth your while that ye trouble yourselves concerning me. There were far greater trials experienced by Moses and the prophets, who were leaders of God's people." And again: "Trusting in the purity of my motives I fear no assault, for what can they do to me more than to take this life." Again: "I am ready to endure death in any of its forms, if it is but in defense of the truth."

When in 1552, he was in great danger, he said: "They

want to taste my blood, although I doubt whether they would like the taste as well as their own sins. But God lives and this faith encourages me. And if all Geneva conspired to kill me, I would yet cry out the word for which they so bitterly hate me—Repent.”

. . . . .

Of Calvin's life at the University of Orleans, when studying law, Beza says that after supping moderately, he would spend half the night in study, and devote the morning to meditation on what he had acquired.

. . . . .

When, in 1533, his friend Nicholas Cop was elected to the rectorship of the University of Paris, Calvin wrote the inaugural oration, taking for his theme the necessity of a reformation of the Church and of theology on the basis of the New Testament. Of course, Calvin and Cop had to flee. Calvin, so the story goes, escaped by the window with the help of several sheets, and fled under the guise of a vine-dresser, having secured the clothes from a friend.

. . . . .

Calvin was nicknamed “spitzkopf”—long-head by the crowd, as over against Luther whom they called “dickkopf”—thick head.

. . . . .

Calvin says, in the preface of the first edition of the “Institutes,” of the reason for the book: “My intention was . . . to indicate some elementary truths, by which those interested in religion might be trained to true piety—and at this task I toiled chiefly for our French, multitudes of whom I saw to be hungering and thirsting after Christ, but very few to be possessed of even a slight knowledge of Him.”

In the preface to his “Commentary on the Psalms,” he says: “Leaving my native country, France, I retired into Germany, expressly for the purpose of being able there to enjoy in some obscure corner the repose which I had always



desired, and which had been so long denied me. But lo! whilst I lay hidden at Basle and known only to a few people, many faithful and holy people were burnt alive in France; and the report of these burnings . . . excited the strongest disapprobation among a great part of the Germans . . . In order to allay this indignation, certain wicked and lying pamphlets were circulated . . . I opposed them to the uttermost of my ability . . . This was the consideration which induced me to publish my 'Institutes.' . . . When it was then published, it was not that labored and copious work which it now is . . . my object was not to acquire fame . . . Whatever else I have done I have taken care to conceal that I was the author of that performance; and I had resolved to continue in the same privacy and obscurity, until at length William Farel detained me at Geneva . . . by a dreadful imprecation."

The following story is told of Luther's reception of one of Calvin's books. "A year before his death when he was coming from his lecture, his students around him, he stopped before the shop of Hans Luft, the bookseller, and hailed his assistant, who had just returned from Frankfort, saying 'Maurice, what is the good news from Frankford? Will they burn the arch-heretic Luther all up?' 'Most reverend sir, I did not hear anything about that,' said the other; 'but I have brought with me a little volume which John Calvin wrote some time ago, in French, upon the Lord's Supper, and which has just been published in Latin. They are saying of Calvin that, though quite young, he is a devout and scholarly person. In this little book this Calvin is said to show where your reverence and Zwingli and Ecolampadius have gone too far in the strife.' He had hardly finished when Dr. Luther cried, 'Give me the book.' He sat down, looked it through, and said as he finished, 'Maurice, he is most certainly a learned and pious person. I might from the very first have well left to him this whole controversy; I confess, for my part, that had the other side done the same, we would have been on good terms from

the start. If Ecolampadius and Zwingli had expressed themselves in this way at the first, we would never have been betrayed into such prolonged controversies.' "

Luther said of Calvin's letter to Sadolet: "This writing has hands and feet and I rejoice that God has called upon such people, who if it be his will, may give the final blow to the papacy, and finish, by his help, what I began against Anti-Christ."

Calvin said of his own work: "I have labored with all my strength for the common good. It would be hypocrisy not to own that the Lord has been pleased to employ me, and that not unprofitably, in his service."

Here is a traditional picture of the man. A man of middle stature and attenuated frame. Face thin and keen, complexion sallow, nose prominent and finely chiseled, brow high and commanding, eyes black as night and gleaming with that peculiar bluish light, which indicates deep and clear thinking, mouth large and well formed; a man who in every line of face and in every action betrays his Latin origin.

He wrote to Farel, in his thirtieth year, of the sort of a woman who would attract him the following: "Do you want to know what sort of beauty alone can win my soul? When loveliness and modesty are joined to simplicity, sufficiency and tenderness." A year later he writes the same friend: "A young lady of the nobility, above my rank and rich, has been proposed. There are two things that kept me from this union: first, she did not understand our language; and then I feared lest she might think too much of her rank and her training." Later, it will be remembered he married Idelette de Bures, a widow.

He loved his wife intensely and of her he writes: "My wife is ill; hence my thoughts are distracted." Again: "She flits night and day before my eyes, alone as she is (she left Strassburg on account of the plague) and comfortless and without support." He called her "*singularis exempli fœmina*," a unique example of a woman. After her death he writes to Viret: "You know the tenderness or far rather the weakness of my heart, and therefore you know full well that, if I had not exercised the whole force of my spirit, I could not have borne it. And indeed the cause of my distress is not a trifling one, I am separated from the best of companions."

He was a man of irascible temper, which he called "His wild beast." In his farewell address to the Council of Geneva, he said: "I own specially that I am greatly indebted to your kindness for bearing so patiently with my often unbridled impetuosity. I hope and trust that God will forgive me the sin, which I have thus committed."

Again in reference to his quick temper, Calvin made this acknowledgment: "I have had no harder battles with my failings, which are great and many, than those which I have had with my impatience. This ravenous beast, I have not yet conquered."

When Calvin stood with Servetus before the council in that famous trial, the following words are said to have been uttered. Calvin, it must be remembered, is seeking to expose the error of his opponent. Servetus exclaims, "everything is God." Calvin replies, "What! do you mean to say that floor on which we tread is God? And what if I ask if Satan is also really God?" Servetus rejoined with a mocking laugh, "Well, do you not believe that?"

Of his work in Geneva, Lord has summarized amongst other things the following: "If a man not forbidden to take the

sacrament neglected it for one year he was condemned to banishment for one year. One was condemned to do public penance if he omitted a Sunday service. The military garrison was summoned to prayers twice a day. The judges punished severely all profanity, as blasphemy. A mason was put in prison three days for simply saying, when falling from a building, that it must be the work of the devil. A young girl who insulted her mother was publicly punished and kept on bread-and-water; and a peasant boy who called his mother a devil was publicly whipped. A child who struck his mother was beheaded; adultery was punished with death; a woman was publicly scourged because she sang common songs to a psalm tune; and another because she dressed herself, in a frolic, in man's attire. Brides were not allowed to wear wreaths in their bonnets; gamblers were set in pillory, and card-playing and nine-pins were denounced as gambling.

. . . . .  
In a letter dated 1547 to the faithful in France he wrote of the church in Geneva: "As for the rumors which are flying about concerning our troubles, first they have for the most part been invented. . . . It is true we have several hard-headed and stiff-necked rebels . . . and especially are our young people very corrupt, so that when they are not allowed every license they go from bad to worse. Of late they were very angry about a trifle. It is because they were not allowed to wear slashed breeches, which have been forbidden in the town for the last twelve years. Not that we would make too much of a point of this, but because we see that, beginning with the breeches, they wish to introduce all sorts of dissolute ways. However we have insisted that the slashing of the breeches was but a bit of foppery not worth mentioning, and we have had another end in view, which was to curb and repress their follies."

. . . . .  
In his will he says: "I do testify that I live and purpose to

die in this faith which God has given me through his gospel, and that I have no other dependence for salvation than the free choice which is made of me by Him. With my whole heart I embrace his mercy, through which all my sins are covered, for Christ's sake, and for the sake of his death and suffering. According to the measure of grace granted unto me, I have taught his own, simple Word, by sermons, by deeds, and by expositions of the Scripture. In all my battles with the enemies of the truth, I have not used sophistry, but have fought the good fight squarely and directly. But alas, my good will and my zeal, if I may so name it, have been so lukewarm and cold that I have fallen immeasurably below the mark in fulfilling my office."

In his last moments of great pain, he was often heard praying: "Lord, thou bruise me, but it is enough for me to know that it is Thou! Who will give me the wings of a dove that I may fly to Thee!"

"Fearless and without guile" was the motto of Calvin.. His coat of arms consisted of a hand offering a burning heart to God.

LEBANON, PA.